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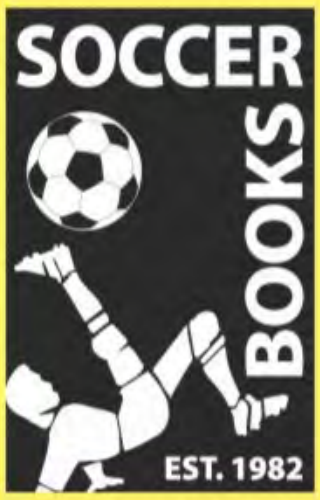

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Contents

November 2019

FEATURES

40 Golden Shoe
Lionel Messi wins again

52 Player biography
Frenkie De Jong

THE WORLD THIS MONTH

People in the news...on and off the pitch

4 **In pictures**
10 **From the Editor**
14 **Keir Radnedge** Racism in Sofia
16 **Ins & Outs** People on the move
18 **Brian Glanville** Don't write off United

HEADLINERS

20 **Martin Odegaard**
22 **Sargis Adamyan**
23 **Josef Martinez**
24 **Roberto Mancini**
26 **Gregg Berhalter**
27 **Niklas Sule**

EYEWITNESS

28 **Qatar**
32 **Bulgaria**
36 **Libertadores Cup**

SIX OF THE BEST

44 **Premier League rejects**

FACE TO FACE

46 **Bob Bradley**

TALENT SCOUT

50 **Teenage tyros**

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

60 **Australia's W-League**

RIVALS

82 **Olympiakos & Panathinaikos**

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65 **Djibouti** Back on the world stage
66 **Africa** Champions League preview
68 **Iran** Female fans watch national team
70 **South America** Friendlies round-up
72 **Euro 2020** Six teams through to finals

PLUS 64 Global diary 74 Results, tables, fixtures 79 ESM XI 80 Squads

In Pictures

The global game caught on camera

ITALY...Paulo Dybala celebrates scoring Juventus' winner against Lokomotiv Moscow in the Champions League

PHILIPPINES...Wu Lei of China gets a shot off against the Philippines in the World Cup qualifier

MEXICO...Felipe Mora of Pumas in action against Leon

ARGENTINA...fireworks light up La Bombonera stadium ahead of Boca Juniors' Copa Libertadores semi-final home leg against River Plate

JAPAN... Guangzhou Evergrande's Park Ji-soo leaves Urawa Red Diamonds midfielder Kazuki Nagasawa on the floor in the AFC Champions League

HOLLAND...Memphis Depay of Holland shows off his back tattoo

SWITZERLAND...Jeff Hendrick of Republic of Ireland shows his disappointment at losing a Euro 2020 qualifier to Switzerland

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FROM THE EDITOR

The recent unpleasant events in Sofia have served to remind us how much football reflects the wider problems of society – and how far the game still has to go in tackling those problems.

If there is an upside to the situation it is that this could mark a turning point in football's dealings with racism. Players such as Raheem Sterling have rightly been praised for calling out racists on social media. Their bravery in being prepared to walk off the pitch in Sofia should provide more than just pause for thought for football's authorities.

But let's not ignore or belittle the problems that still exist in English football. Whether it's at Stamford Bridge, the New Den or non-league grounds up and down the country, the English game still has a huge problem with racism and racists.

Bulgaria were well beaten by England but are set to feature in the Euro 2020 play-offs in March – unless UEFA takes a stand against them. Such a move would go some way to dispelling the idea that UEFA is only interested in administering a sanitised, made-for-TV sport that ignores the game's wider place within society. But don't hold your breath.

Bulgaria were well beaten by England but are set to feature in the Euro 2020 play-offs – unless UEFA takes a stand

Gavin Hamilton, Editor

10 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THIS MONTH

1 Six teams qualify for Euro 2020 finals p72
2 FIFA announces plans for expanded Club World Cup p10
3 Lionel Messi presented with record sixth Golden Shoe p40
4 Bulgaria condemned for racism at Euro qualifier p32
5 Libertadores finalists confirmed p36
6 Female fans admitted to Iran World Cup qualifier p68
7 Milan turn to Stefano Pioli p16
8 Canada beat USA in CONCACAF Nations League p26
9 Bob Bradley leads LAFC into MLS play-offs p46
10 Michel Platini global ban ends p15

New look...the tournament format is changing

CLUB WORLD CUP

China to host expanded Club World Cup in 2021

The FIFA Council meeting in Shanghai has awarded the hosting rights to an expanded Club World Cup in 2021 to China.

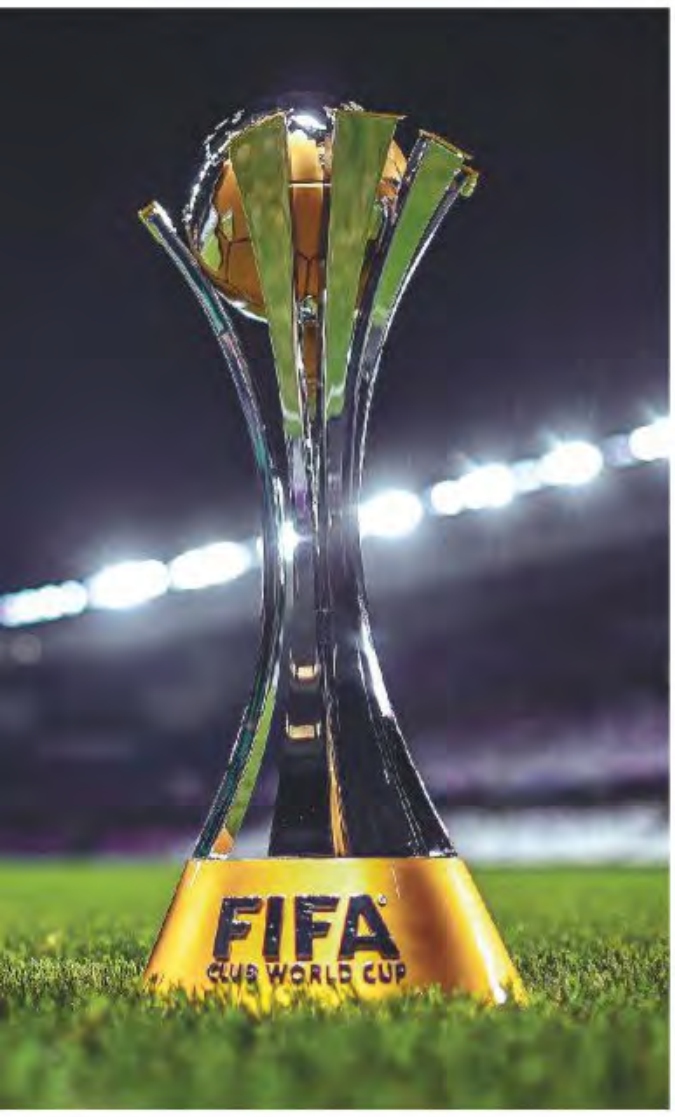
Under the new format, the Club World Cup will be increased to 24 teams from the current eight.

It will be held every four years and replaces both the current annual competition and the Confederations Cup – the unloved tournament between continental champions that has been used as a pre-World Cup warm-up since 1997.

Europe will supply eight of the 24 teams, including recent winners of the Champions League and Europa League. So Real Madrid, Liverpool, Atletico Madrid and Chelsea will be among those taking part in the 2021 event. European clubs, via the European Club Association, had initially said that they would

"[Frank] Lampard rang to ask me not to pick Kante. Fine, but sometimes it should go the other way too. Maybe I should ask Lampard to play Giroud more"

France coach Didier Deschamps on the club-versus-country conundrum



boycott the proposed expanded event.

The choice of China was criticised by human-rights campaigners but FIFA president Gianni Infantino said: "We have a social responsibility due to the magnitude and the power that football brings with it, but we don't do that by attacking, criticising anyone."

The meeting also confirmed that the host of the 2030 World Cup will be decided in 2024, with the bidding process starting in 2022.

Invited...Liverpool (in red) and Chelsea will play in 2021

HEROES & VILLAINS

LINDA CAICEDO

The 14-year-old scored the goal that won America their first Colombian Women's League title. America lost 2-1 to Independiente Medellin but won 3-2 on aggregate. Both teams will now represent Colombia in the Copa Libertadores Feminina, although the minimum age to play in the competition is 16, so Caicedo will have to watch from the stands.

ESTEBAN PAREDES

Became the leading all-time goalscorer in the Chilean top flight with 216 goals in 387 games. The 39-year-old Colo Colo forward beat the previous record set in 1975.

Top goalscorer...Esteban Paredes

JOHN McGINN

The Aston Villa midfielder's goals against San Marino meant he became the first player to score a first-half hat-trick for Scotland since Lawrie Reilly against USA in a friendly in April 1952, 67 years ago.

OSCAR TABAREZ

The 72-year-old became the first coach to lead a national team in 200 matches as Uruguay drew 1-1 away to Peru. Suffering from a nerve disorder that forces him to use crutches to walk, his record does not include internationals during his reign when he was unable to sit on the bench either through illness or suspension.

Landmark...Uruguay's veteran coach Oscar Tabarez

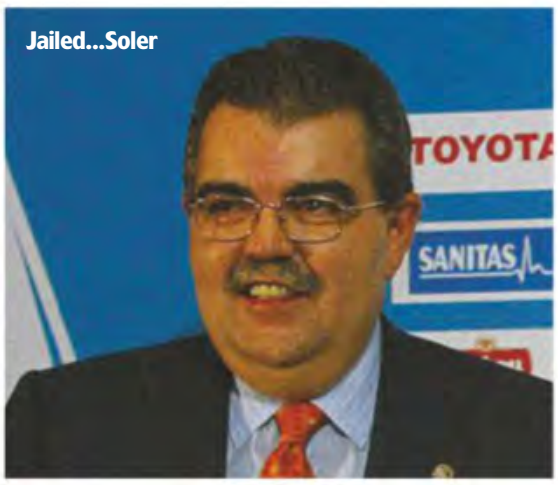
Robbery...Nice sacked Lamine Diaby-Fadiga

LAMINE DIABY-FADIGA

The France under-18 striker was sacked by Nice after he admitted stealing a watch worth a reported £62,000 from team-mate Kasper Dolberg. The teenager wrote on Twitter: "My situation of failure contrasted with the success and aura of Kasper. I lashed out at him for no reason, perhaps out of jealousy."

SAYED ALI REZA AGHAZADA

The former Afghanistan FA chief received a five-year ban after he failed to report and prevent sexual abuse of female players despite their complaints.



Jailed...Soler

JUAN BAUTISTA SOLER

The former Valencia president was jailed for two years for attempting to kidnap Vicente Soriano, the club's former vice-president who later succeeded him as president.

DOMINGO MITUY EDJANG

The former president of the Equatorial Guinea Football Federation was banned from the game for four years after being found guilty of diverting FIFA development grants into his own bank account. He left the federation a reported £1.2million in debt and with salaries unpaid for almost a year.

"We made history, but our job is not done"

Canada coach John Herdman after a 2-0 win against USA in the CONCACAF Nations League, their first victory over their neighbours in 34 years

Zdenek ONDRASEK

(Czech Rep)

Nicknamed "The Kobra" by fans of MLS side Dallas, the striker received a shock first call-up to the Czech national squad at the age of 30 and scored the winning goal on his debut in a 2-1 victory over England in the Euro 2020 qualifiers.

"I just wanted to hit the ball right and put it in the net," says Ondrasek, who came on as a substitute and put the Czechs into the second place in the group. "I saw tears in the eyes of my father probably for the first time in my life. It's a great win and a great feeling."

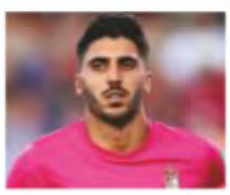
The shaven-headed forward, who has not played in his home country since 2011, then started the friendly against Northern Ireland and provided assists for both Czech goals in a 3-2 defeat.

Admitting to past problems with "diet, smoking and playing slot machines", he was with Tromso in Norway and Poland's Wisla Krakow before moving to MLS earlier this year.

RUI SILVA
(Granada)
The Portuguese keeper has been in inspirational form for his club during their surprise rise into La Liga's top four.

IHLAS BEBOU
(Hoffenheim)
The Togo winger signed from relegated Hanover has been hugely impressive.

VICTOR OSIMHEN
(Lille)
The Nigerian was voted Ligue 1's player of the month for September as Lille climbed into the top five.



ALESSANDRO BASTONI
(Internazionale)
The Italy under-21 centre-back had a fine Serie A debut against Sampdoria.

RAYAN CHERKI
(Lyon)
New Lyon boss Rudi Garcia appeased fans by including the exciting attacking prospect in his first squad.

FABIO SILVA
(Porto)
Aged 17 years and three months, he became Porto's youngest-ever scorer with a goal in the Portuguese Cup.

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Keir RADNEDGE

THE INSIDER

Sofia racism was a disaster waiting to happen

The racism which scarred England's visit to Bulgaria was an indirect product of complacency within international football by those who do care and carelessness by those who do not.

Coded admissions emerged in responsive statements from presidents Aleksander Ceferin of UEFA and Gianni Infantino of FIFA. Both urged governments and society in general to do more in terms of anti-racism education, but in the current nationalist and austerity climates that is a wish beyond fulfilment.

But that does not exonerate football from accepting its own responsibilities – which is easier said than done as the experiences of FIFA and UEFA prove.

History demonstrates that football's governing bodies were notoriously slow to address the issue of racism in the first place. Back in 2003, Patrick Vieira was infamously fined by UEFA after criticising Europe's governing body for not being tough enough on racism. The then-Arsenal captain had spoken out after a Champions League tie in Valencia. He was fined £2,300 and Valencia £9,250 – and UEFA's reputation in terms of anti-discriminatory behaviour has yet to recover from that disciplinary idiocy.

To be fair to Ceferin, in August 2017 one of his first major campaign launches after becoming president was a revamped anti-racism project entitled "#EqualGame". This built on the 2008 "Prevent" promotion and the 2013 "No to Racism" expansion. UEFA described it as "the most ambitious version created and promoted by any international sports federation" and the development was welcomed at a time when FIFA had dropped its own anti-racism baton amid its own internal crisis.

Ceferin enrolled high-profile lead ambassadors such as Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, Paul Pogba and Ada Hegerberg. But now he and those ExCo colleagues who care may reflect that EqualGame's focus was too wide-ranging. The anti-racism message was watered down in a campaign that also encompassed support of walking football, the grass-roots women's game and players with physical impairments.

As Ceferin acknowledged after the events in Sofia: "There were times, not long ago, when the football family thought that the scourge of racism was a distant memory. The last couple of years have taught us that such thinking was, at best, complacent.

"The rise of nationalism across the continent has fuelled some unacceptable behaviour and some have taken it upon themselves to think that a football crowd is the right place to give voice to their appalling views."

Ceferin complained that "some of the views expressed about UEFA's approach to fighting racism have been a long way off the mark". He cited a failure to credit the co-operation with Football Against Racism Europe and the three-stage protocol activated in Sofia. He also proclaimed UEFA's sanctions as "among the toughest in sport for clubs and associations whose supporters are racist at our matches".

Ceferin's examples of UEFA's commitment to "doing everything to eliminate this disease from football" include the partial closures of stadia "which costs the hosts at least hundreds of thousands in lost revenue".

UEFA's disciplinary commission deals regularly with racist behaviour in all the European competitions but partial or total closures and perfunctory fines have clearly had little effect. And why should they? After all, it's not the hooligans who pay up but the national associations and the clubs.

A quick check of UEFA's sanctions for racist behaviour in the past five months reveals eight closures, six partial closures, one away-tickets

Sign...Bulgaria players display a "#EqualGame" message before facing England

> "There were times, not long ago, when the football family thought that the scourge of racism was a distant memory"
>
> UEFA president, Aleksander Ceferin

ban and fines ranging between nothing and €80,000:

- Closed doors and fines: Hungary (€67,125), Romania (€83,000), Slovakia (€20,000), Dinamo Tbilisi (€50,000), Partizan Belgrade, Slovan Bratislava (€50,000), Universitatea Craiova (€60,000), Serbia (€33,250)
- Partial closures: Bulgaria, Romania, Lazio, Levski Sofia, Lokomotiv Plovdiv, Rangers
- No away tickets: Red Star Belgrade (€50,000)

Racist incident charges were raised but then dropped against Latvia, Olympiakos and Porto.

This is not an insignificant number of punishments, but virtually all of them went unreported except in the countries directly affected. To that extent, UEFA has a message problem. This also stems from the fact that, for administrative convenience, disciplinary action for racist incidents is lumped in with fireworks, stewarding failures, kit-regulation breaches, serious foul play, dissent, etc.

Hence whatever action UEFA does take is buried among the day-to-day disciplinary detritus and rarely makes the mainstream media.

Ceferin admits "football associations themselves cannot solve this [racism] problem" and has appealed to "everyone from administrators to players, coaches and fans to work with governments and NGOs to wage war on the racists and marginalise their abhorrent views to the fringes of society".

Infantino echoed him, saying: "We will need the support of public authorities to help us identify and punish the culprits, but we probably also need to think more broadly on what we can do to fix this.

"When we proposed the three-step procedure in 2009 when I was at UEFA, and then made the regulations even tougher a few years later, we could not have imagined that so shortly thereafter we would again be having to think of how to combat this obnoxious disease that seems to be getting even worse in some parts of the world."

Maybe a start might be withholding those annual FIFA grants and/or the TV cash share-out from central marketing of the European Championship?

Competition expulsion must also be added to the protocol. WS

Bienvenue Michel?

Michel Platini is back. Well, free at least. Now 64, the former UEFA president has completed his four-year suspension for accepting a $2million "disloyal payment" from FIFA, as approved by then-supremo Sepp Blatter. The ban prevented Platini standing in the election – for which he would have been favourite – to become FIFA president in the spring of 2016.

Platini remains bitter and angry at the men and the system which, he insists, betrayed him. His ban expired on October 7 and he has expressed a will to return to the game.

He also resents Gianni Infantino

Back... Michel Platini

wielding the crown which should have been his, stating: "Gianni Infantino was a very good lawyer, a very good general-secretary, but he has no legitimacy, no credibility as president of FIFA."

Earlier this year Platini devised a plan to bring together, under his leadership, the top clubs' body ECA and the players' union FIFPro.

His idea was "that they could work with each other and decide whether they wanted to continue with the Champions League or some other competition".

Platini had high hopes after discussing his idea with Philippe Piat, head of FIFPro, and Andrea Agnelli, president of Juventus. But he was to be disappointed, claiming: "They all said they would get back to me and never did."

Don't call us, we'll call you.

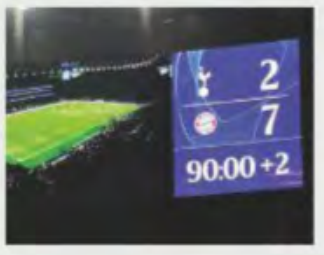
WINNERS

MARCELO GALLARDO
The River Plate boss became the first coach to win three *Superclasicos* in a row when River beat Boca Juniors 2-0 in their Copa Libertadores semi-final first leg.

CYPRUS
Their 2-1 win in Kazakhstan in a Euro qualifier was the first time in 59 years they won a competitive game in which they had trailed at half-time.

ANDORRA
Ended a 21-year wait for a first Euro qualifying win with a 1-0 victory over Moldova.

LOSERS



TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR
Their 7-2 loss to Bayern Munich was the biggest home defeat for an English team in any European competition.

MARCO GIAMPAOLO
Sacked after just 111 days in charge, he became the shortest-serving coach in Milan's history.

CAMBODIA
Lost 14-0 away to Iran and then 4-0 at home to Iraq in the space of five days during the latest round of World Cup qualifiers in Asia. After four games they are bottom of Group D with a -19 goal difference.

"They lack speed, power and tactical awareness. When you compare someone like [Achraf] Hakimi to these players, it's like watching two different

New Morocco coach Vadid Halilhodzic reflects on the poor quality of his local-based players

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

IN

Replacement... Pablo Machin

EUROPE

GEORGI DERMENDZHIEV, who won three successive Bulgarian league titles as coach of Ludogorets, replaced Krassimir Balakov in charge of the country's national team.

PABLO MACHIN took over from David Gallego as coach of La Liga strugglers Espanyol.

FRANC ARTIGA replaced Victor Valdes as boss of Barcelona's under-19 team after the three-time Champions League winner reportedly clashed with former striker Patrick Kluivert, who is in charge of the club's La Masia youth academy.

Former Marseille coach **RUDI GARCIA** took over from Sylvinho in charge of Lyon, while Saint-Etienne sacked Ghislain Printant and replaced him with the former Southampton and Leicester City boss, **CLAUDE PUEL**. Toulouse parted company with Alain Casanova and appointed **ANTOINE KOMBOUARE**.

Replaced by **PEDRO RIBEIRO** after being sacked by Belenenses SAD, **SILAS** was appointed coach of Lisbon side Sporting.

Former Anderlecht boss **FRANK VERCAUTEREN** returned to the Belgian club to assist player-coach Vincent Kompany following the departure of technical director Frank Arnesen.

Former England left-back **ASHLEY COLE** returned to former club Chelsea and joined their academy coaching staff.

Sacked by Krasnodar after he was jailed for attacking a trade-ministry official and another man in October 2018, Russia midfielder **PAVEL MAMAEV** signed a two-year contract with Rostov following his early release from prison.

Freiburg president **FRITZ KELLER** was elected president of the German Football Association.

DAVID PEMSEL will start work as the Premier League's new chief executive "no later than April 2020"

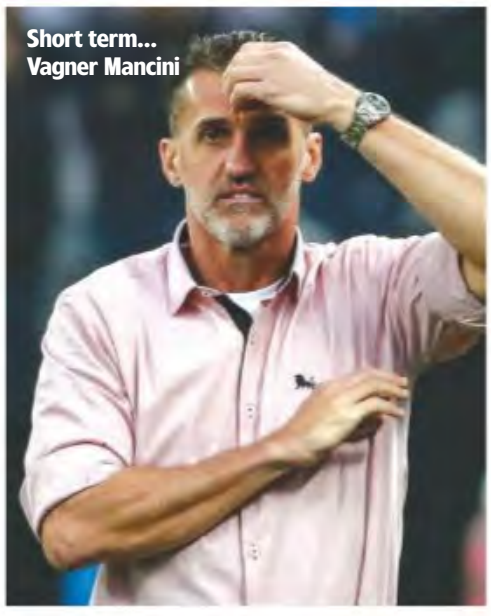
Struggling Milan turn to Pioli

Ex-Internazionale coach **STEFANO PIOLI** replaced Marco Giampaolo, who became Milan's shortest-serving coach when he departed after seven games of the Serie A campaign. Pioli is Milan's ninth full-time boss since they last won the Italian title, in 2011.

CLAUDIO RANIERI took over from Eusebio Di Francesco with Sampdoria bottom of Serie A.

THIAGO MOTTA replaced Aurelio Andreazzoli at Genoa.

Change...Stefano Pioli



Short term... Vagner Mancini

SOUTH AMERICA

VAGNER MANCINI replaced Rodrigo Santana as coach of Brazilian Serie A strugglers Atletico Mineiro until the end of the season.

CONCACAF

ANTONIO MOHAMED returned to Monterrey for a second spell as coach and will lead the Mexican side at December's Club World Cup in Qatar.

Costa Rica appointed **RONALD GONZALEZ** as national coach.

AFRICA

FRANCOIS ZAHOUI, who led Ivory Coast to the 2012 Africa Cup of Nations Final, was appointed coach of Central African Republic after leaving Niger.

Uganda appointed Northern Irishman **JOHNNY McKINSTRY** as coach.

ASIA

ANTOINE HEY returned for a second spell as coach of Myanmar, replacing Miodrag Radulovic.

Brazilian coach **EDSON TAVARES** took charge of last season's Indonesian champions, Persija Jakarta.

Former Tottenham Hotspur and Zamalek boss **CHRISTIAN GROSS** returned for a third spell as coach of Saudi side Al Ahli.

"I used to pray for Saturday fixtures so I could go to the Formula 1 on Sunday. It was private jets all over the place. It was crazy"

Roberto Carlos on life at Real Madrid

Appointments, sackings and loans

Gone...Odair Hellman

EUROPE

- A World Cup winner with Germany in 2014 and a Bundesliga champion eight times with Bayern Munich, **BASTIAN SCHWEINSTEIGER** retired, aged 35, after playing in MLS with Chicago Fire.
- **CLAUDIO MARCHISIO**, who won seven Serie A titles with Juventus and was capped 55 times by Italy, retired at the age of 33.
- Former West Bromwich Albion and Rangers defender **GARETH MCAULEY**, who won 80 caps for Northern Ireland, announced his retirement aged 39.
- **JOHN DELANEY** resigned as executive vice-president of the Football Association of Ireland.

SOUTH AMERICA

- Brazil's Internacional parted company with coach **ODAIR HELLMANN**.

CONCACAF

- Orlando City fired coach **JAMES O'CONNOR** after missing out on an MLS play-off place.
- Colorado Rapids keeper **TIM HOWARD**, who won 121 USA caps, retired at the end of the MLS season.

AFRICA

- Morocco captain **MEDHI BENATIA**, who won 62 caps and played in four Africa Cup of Nations and the 2018 World Cup, retired from international football.
- Equatorial Guinea coach **ANGEL LOPEZ** stepped down, saying he needed "a new challenge".

ASIA

- Syria's all-time record scorer with 36 goals for his country, **FIRAS AL KHATIB** retired at the age of 36.

Over...Tim Howard

Left... Mauricio Pellegrino

Coach Pellegrino leaves Leganes

Former Alaves and Southampton boss **MAURICIO PELLEGRINO** left his role in charge of Leganes after the club managed just two points in their opening nine La Liga matches.

Argentinian coach Pellegrino joined Leganes in summer 2018 and the club finished in 13th place in his first season in charge.

OBITUARIES

Collapsed... Promise Isaac

Promise ISAAC (1987-2019)
Skippered Nigeria under-20s when they won the African Youth Championship in 2005, scoring both goals in the Final against Egypt, and also wore the captain's armband as his country won an Olympic silver medal in 2008. A striker with Austin Bold of the USL, he collapsed and died at his home gym in Texas, aged 31.

Brian GLANVILLE

THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL

Souness should have known better than to write off Manchester United

"Liverpool look nailed on to win at Old Trafford today against a Manchester United side in turmoil and lacking leaders." Thus said Graeme Souness on the morning of their match.

With all his experience, both impressively on and subsequently off the field, he should surely have known that football remains an unpredictable game, with certainty so often a stranger.

"Solskjaer has a team short on flair, form and fitness," Souness pursued. "It's hard to see it changing." Well, change it dramatically did. In front of their own crowd, Manchester United rose from the supposed ashes and achieved an honourable draw.

No surrender. No being outplayed and out performed. Such is the glory of the game and that is why it is so dangerous to make such emphatic forecasts.

United have some £300million to spend and Ed Woodward, the chief executive, is reportedly hoping for some four new signings. They have a vast network of 32 scouts in 30 countries, so recruitment should not be a problem.

Liverpool have never found it easy to win at Old Trafford, so perhaps it should come as no surprise that their long winning streak should have come to an end on this occasion.

Threat...Liverpool try to crowd out Marcus Rashford

Manchester United unquestionably rose above themselves and, though Liverpool's managerJurgen Klopp may have had a point when he complained that one of his players was fouled in the build-up to United's goal, overall the home team deserved to go ahead.

Marcus Rashford is a reliable goalscorer as he proved once more on this occasion. Liverpool retain a commanding lead in the Premier League but I think we may now see a United revival. They were hardly either in turmoil or lacking leaders on this occasion.

> Liverpool have never found it easy to win at Old Trafford

Ever genial Elton

"I think Watford might have saved my life," writes that immensely successful singer Elton John, who has just published "ME", his autobiography. It was surely a reciprocal affair, as the club have much benefitted from his support.

Roy Dwight, a cousin he much admired, played for Nottingham Forest in the 1959 FA Cup Final at Wembley and later got him a job packing parcels in Denmark Street, Soho, where bandsmen traditionally gathered.

Years ago I wrote a long magazine profile of him. In the late 1970s he tells that he was taking cocaine and says that all he can recall of that period were the victories obtained by Watford.

My own recollections of him are of someone fundamentally decent and generous. When a Canadian magazine asked me for a version of that article they initially rejected the idea that the photos be taken by my younger son. Elton declared that if Toby didn't take the picture he'd refuse to co-operate. Toby duly took them.

During that dire time, he recalls: "I couldn't lose my temper or sulk nor could I take drugs or get drunk. I was there as a representative of the club." He cheerfully endured the teasing of the spectators around the directors' box.

Under his aegis and the management of Graham Taylor, the club came shooting up from the depths of the fourth division to second place in the top, and to Wembley for an FA Cup Final.

Reg Dwight, his actual name, had modulated into an international singing star. An ever genial one.

Home...Elton John (centre) playing at Vicarage Road

What future for Foden at City?

"We were fantastic," exulted the Wolves captain Conor Coady after victory over Manchester City, but we should surely keep things in proper proportion.

City were without Aymeric Laporte, John Stones, Leroy Sane and perhaps most significantly of all, Kevin De Bruyne, the outstandingly effective and creative attacker. So all credit to manager Pep Guardiola for not trying to use these salient facts as a valid excuse for his team's defeat.

Given that they were missing so many first-choice players, it was baffling that Guardiola kept on the subs bench the gifted Phil Foden, who must surely be wondering what kind of future is afforded him by a club which fails to turn to him in such a dismal display as was this.

Gifted... Phil Foden

The two sides of Southgate's England

Struggle...Raheem Sterling fails to escape the Czech defence in Prague

Within a few days, two sharply contrasting results for the England football team.

First, a dull and unimpressive display in Prague, where two arguably avoidable goals were given away and the incentive of an early penalty lead was squandered.

The Czechs, with adventurous full-backs, used the flanks well, but their second goal was an embarrassment for the England defence.

The subsequent match in Bulgaria, who had been comfortably defeated at Wembley, was a sharp and productive contrast. This time the home side gifted England with surprisingly abundant space which was largely put to good use. The arrival in central defence of the 6ft 3in Tyrone Mings filled what had been an embarrassing weakness.

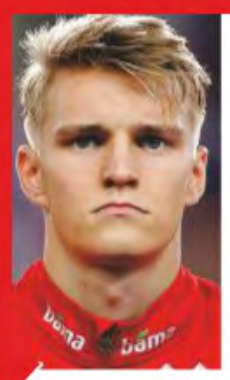
The lack of a valid playmaker had been all too obvious in Prague but in Sofia one was scarcely needed. There still seems to me a good case for giving a chance to Aston Villa's Jack Grealish, who should surely have been at least in the squad for the previous couple of games. Now that his team are in the Premier League he will surely be at least given attention.

If you are going to use a number 10 it should be a genuine creator; something which cried out to be remedied in the defeat in Prague.

Sooner rather than later we should surely be seeing the impressive and precocious Callum Hudson-Odoi back in a senior England squad.

Very much a Chelsea development, born not far away in Wandsworth, he turns 19 in November. Last season he made just 10 league appearances, but this season he has begun to come into his own. One more natural English winger with a bright future before him.

● Read Brian Glanville's weekly online column at worldsoccer.com



Martin Odegaard

Norwegian starlet coming of age in San Sebastian

Reports of Martin Odegaard's demise have been greatly exaggerated. The one-time teenage wonderkid has been a revelation for Real Sociedad in the early weeks of this season and was named September's player of the month in La Liga.

His goals and assists while on loan from Real Madrid helped to propel *La Real* up to fifth in the table before October's international break. He produced a standout performance in a 2-0 victory over Atletico Madrid, as well as providing a brilliant pass for Mikel Oyarzabal to score against Alaves.

It is almost five years since a 16-year-old Odegaard was thrust into the spotlight in Madrid, presented by Emilio Butragueno at a packed press conference after a triumphant Madrid had seen off competition from across Europe to sign him from Norwegian side Stromsgodset.

Odegaard had sent tongues wagging across the continent after making his competitive debut for Stromsgodset at the age of 15 years and 117 days, and he first played for Norway's senior international side at 15 years and 253 days. Guided by his father, Hans Erik, who would join the Madrid coaching staff to help his son acclimatise to life in the Spanish capital, Odegaard came to typify the lengths to which Europe's elite clubs would go to sign burgeoning talent.

In May 2015 he became the youngest player to represent Real Madrid when he appeared as a 58th-minute substitute, replacing Cristiano Ronaldo in the final

Standout...beating Atletico Madrid

Liga game of the season, against Getafe. In November 2016 he made his first start for the club, in the Copa del Rey against third-tier Cultural Leonesa.

The plan had been for Odegaard to train with the first team while also turning out for Castilla, the club's reserve side. But his progress stalled – there were complaints about his attitude in training – and in January 2017 he was loaned to Dutch side Heerenveen for 18 months.

The critics were quick to write off Odegaard as another of the "too much, too young" brigade. In his autobiography, Carlo Ancelotti, who was Madrid's coach at the time of Odegaard's arrival, blamed president Florentino Perez's obsession with PR stunts. "When Florentino buys a Norwegian footballer, you simply have to accept it," he wrote. "Furthermore, the president decided that he would play three games with the first team as a public relations exercise."

> "My goal is to play for Madrid, but for now *La Real* is the right place for me"

Odegaard managed to hold down a first-team place at Heerenveen but without ever suggesting he would return to Madrid to challenge the *galacticos*. Instead, he went out on loan again, in the summer of 2018 to Vitesse, where he enjoyed a stellar campaign and was the only non Ajax or PSV player to feature in the Eredivisie team of the season.

Odegaard was also recalled by national coach Lars Lagerbeck and was outstanding in Norway's recent 1-1 draw with Spain, in which one of the game's highlights was Odegaard nutmegging Madrid team-mate Sergio Ramos.

Highlight...beating Sergio Ramos on international duty

With the player under contract until 2023, Madrid were keen for Odegaard, after two loan spells in the Eredivisie, to step up a grade with another temporary move this summer.

There were offers from Bayer Leverkusen and Ajax, as well as Sociedad, and although Real Madrid thought a move to Germany would be better for his development they gave the player the freedom to decide for himself.

With the arrival of Eden Hazard and Rodrygo, there was little chance of Odegaard returning to Madrid, especially with the continued presence of Vinicius Junior, Marco Asensio, Isco and Lucas Vazquez. But a move to another Spanish side allows Madrid to keep closer tabs on their asset and gives Odegaard the chance to shine closer to home.

Despite injuries to a number of key players, Madrid are highly unlikely to call time on Odegaard's two-year loan in San Sebastian. But the long-term plan remains for Odegaard to return to Madrid, and before he went to Sociedad he signed a new deal with a release clause of €350million.

"I'm happy here for the moment," he recently told ESPN. "I'm going to stay here for two years and then we'll see.

"My goal is to play for Madrid, but for now *La Real* is the right place for me. It's my dream to play for Madrid, it's what I hope to do, so in 10 years I hope to be at Real Madrid.

"They will always sign players. It's important for the club and it's normal. Competition is always a good thing because they want to be the best team in the world."

John Holmesdale

Presentation...with Emilio Butragueno on the day that he officially signed for Real Madrid

Sargis Adamyan

Hoffenheim's Armenian striker hailed for debut goals against Bayern

Sargis Adamyan is unlikely to ever forget his first start in the Bundesliga, during which he scored both goals in his side's shock 2-1 win away at perennial German champions Bayern Munich.

As recently as 2017 he was scratching a living playing in the fourth tier for TSV Steinbach. Now the 26-year-old is the name on everyone's lips after the late-bloomer sent Bayern spinning to their first league defeat of the season.

Hoffenheim's shock victory allowed Borussia Monchengladbach and Wolfsburg – who were the only Bundesliga side to remain unbeaten after seven games – to leapfrog Bayern at the top of the table ahead of the international break.

A bargain €1.5million signing from second-tier Jahn Regensburg this summer, he would probably not even have been on the Allianz Arena pitch if first-choice front-men Andrej Kramaric and Ishak Belfodil had not been sidelined with a knee injury and tonsillitis respectively. But how emphatically the Armenian international seized his chance.

> "He gives his absolute all in every training session and match"
>
> **Hoffenheim team-mate Benjamin Hubner**

"You could say this is the biggest moment of my career," he said in an emotional post-match interview, almost speechless with delight. "To play in such a stadium is an amazing dream for me."

On the evidence of his five-star performance against Bayern, his days as a relative football nobody are well and truly over.

Combining pace, power and intensity, he is sharp and elusive in his off-the-ball-movement and can shoot powerfully with either foot. Apart from an early chance which he spurned, he showed no sign at all of big-match nerves and also put in a full *gegenpressing* shift.

The son of a shoemaker, he was born in the Armenian capital Yerevan but brought up in the north-eastern German state of Mecklenburg-West Pomerania and clearly revels in high-profile away fixtures. Last term, while leading the

Dream debut...celebrating his opening goal in Munich (above) and beating Bayern defender Jerome Boateng (below)

Regensburg line in 2.Bundesliga, he got a hat-trick in the 5-0 dismantling of once-mighty Hamburg.

An extra string to his bow is his versatility. At Steinbach he operated in all manner of attacking positions – number 10, right-winger or second striker – and more often than not lined up on the left wing for Regensburg, regularly cutting inside to score.

A regional table tennis champion in his youth, he may be an elite novice but that's exactly where he finds his hunger and drive. He always thought he would reach the promised land one day and is permanently fired up to make sure he stays there.

"This is his first experience in the top grade and he gives his absolute all in every training session and match," says Hoffenheim team-mate Benjamin Hubner. "It's great to see someone like him rewarded."

Nick Bidwell

Threat...causing problems for Mexico's defence

Josef Martinez

Striker quits Venezuela in protest at coach

The Venezuela national team has lost the services of one of its most senior players after MLS star Martinez announced that he is no longer available for selection. He says he will not represent his country while former goalkeeper Rafael Dudamel remains in charge.

Martinez referred to a breakdown in relations over the course of Dudamel's three-year reign, with this year's Copa America marking a new low point.

It had been clear for some time that all was not well.

In the 2016 Copa, and the closing stages of the last World Cup qualification campaign, the Atlanta United player was often the first player to be substituted – and he made little secret of his displeasure as he left the field. More recently he has not even been in the starting line-up, with all three of his appearances in the latest Copa coming off the bench.

> Martinez went on an MLS record-breaking 15-game scoring run that was only ended by injury

However strained relations are between player and coach, the explanation can not be limited to the personal. There would also appear to be tactical motives.

Since the last set of World Cup qualifiers, Dudamel seems set on a 4-1-4-1 shape which gives him a triangle in the centre of the pitch, with a mixed midfielder either side of a holder. It also gives him a triangle up front, where Salomon Rondon is the big target-man centre-forward, with hopes that recent Boca Juniors signing Jan Hurtado will be his burly, long-term replacement.

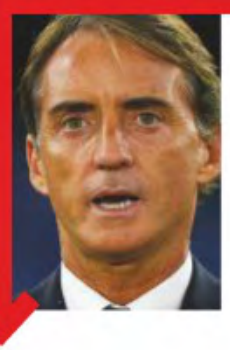
On the flanks, Dudamel likes quick, tricky wingers such as Darwin Machis, Jhon Murillo, Yeferson Soteldo and Jefferson Savarino. There is, therefore, no room for a second striker – the role Martinez used to play supporting Rondon.

Martinez has made it clear that he would like to continue his international career and add to his 11 goals in 51 games, but it will need a change of coach – and, almost certainly, a change in formation. He is not an out-and-out number nine, nor is he a winger, although his pace means he could certainly improvise there. Instead, he is the type of striker who, at the top level, is best suited to a 4-4-2 set-up.

Martinez's club coach is Frank De Boer and there were teething troubles at Atlanta for the more defence-minded Dutchman when he took charge this term.

However, a mid-season switch to a back three and wing-backs boosted the side's attacking options – and Martinez was the major beneficiary, going on an MLS record-breaking 15-game scoring run that was only ended by injury and he was substituted against San Jose.

Tim Vickery



Roberto Mancini

Italy put World Cup misery behind them to qualify for Euro 2020

You have to hand it to Roberto Mancini, the national coach who qualified Italy well ahead of time for next summer's Euro 2020 Championship thanks to a 2-0 victory over Greece.

While it could be argued that winning a group that contains Finland, Bosnia, Greece, Armenia and Liechtenstein is no great shakes – and what you would expect from the four-times world champions – what must be remembered is Mancini began this qualifying campaign from the back of the grid.

Just 23 months after the most humiliating international night in recent Italian history, when a goalless draw with Sweden meant missing out on Russia 2018, Italy are back at the top table of world football.

Mancini has only been in the Italian hot seat for 17 months, but in that time he has forged a side that equalled the *Azzurri*'s all-time record of nine straight wins with a 5-0 victory in Liechtenstein and secured a spot at next summer's extravaganza with three games to spare.

The opposition is what it is, but you cannot do better than to beat them all – and beating them at times with sparkling football. That is, of course, until the game against Greece, when the new-look Italy rather ground to a halt in the face of a dour Greek side going through its own dark night of the soul.

> "We've managed to build this side in a very short time...all I did was try to make them believe in their abilities"

In the four qualifiers prior to the Italy game, Greece had lost at home to both Italy and Armenia, had lost away to Finland and, most disappointingly of all, drawn 1-1 at home to Liechtenstein. That string of bad results saw former Holland international John Van't Schip brought in to replace Angelos Anastasiadis as coach.

Clearly, Van't Schip's priorities are about getting the ship back on an even keel and his policy at the Olimpico in Rome, understandably enough, was to limit the damage as much as possible – reflected by the fact that Greece played almost all of the game in their own final third and Italy recorded 71.1 per cent possession.

Faced with the entire Greek side lined up 30 yards from goal, Italy struggled to find any sort of rhythm and managed to create few real chances.

In the end it took a handball from defender Andreas Bouchalakis to break the deadlock, with Jorginho coolly slotting home the 63rd-minute penalty.

Federico Bernardeschi, who had come on as a 39th-minute substitute to replace the injured Federico Chiesa, wrapped up the contest in the 78th minute with a shot from outside the area which, due to a possible deflection, appeared to catch keeper Alexandros Paschalakis off guard.

In the end, Italy were deserved

Delight...Lorenzo Insigne (left) and Jorginho

Job done...Mancini

winners of a game in which the traffic was almost exclusively one way. Yet, the fact is that, when the game was goalless, the two best chances of the first hour went to the visitors on two of their rare sorties upfield.

Speaking after the game, Mancini avoided making any triumphant noises, saying: "We've managed to build this side in a very short time and that was not that easy. I have got to thank my players who have done well to create a good feeling among themselves.

"All I did was try to make them believe in their abilities."

With qualification in the bag, Mancini can now experiment with his side and he will probably want to take a closer look at players such as Torino goalkeeper Salvatore Sirigu, Napoli right-back Giovanni Di Lorenzo, Roma defender Gianluca Mancini, Brescia's Sandro Tonali, Roma's attacking midfielder Nicolo Zaniolo and the experienced Andrea Belotti of Torino.

However, with one eye on the world rankings he will not want to risk too much just yet.

On the morning after the win against Greece, the entire Italy squad was up early to travel into the centre of Rome for a Vatican audience with Pope Francis.

Mancini presented the Pope with a "Bergoglio 10" shirt, signed by all the players. The Holy Father, for his part, gave the squad his blessing, reminding the players of the "happiness that can come from a game, from football". After all, he said, "even with a ball of straw you can perform miracles".

Italy and Mancini hardly performed miracles against Greece, but it seems clear that a new wind is blowing through Italian football, at least as far as *La Nazionale* are concerned.

Back in November 2017, on the night of the draw with Sweden, that would have been hard to predict with any confidence.

Paddy Agnew

Gregg Berhalter

Shock defeat to Canada ramps up the pressure on USA coach

Opener...Alphonso Davies (in red, on ground) puts Canada in front

The USA's national-team problems continue. After their failure to qualify for the 2018 World Cup and this summer's loss to Mexico in the Gold Cup Final, they went down 2-0 to Canada in the inaugural CONCACAF Nations League.

It was the first time in 17 games against Canada that the United States had lost, and the first time since 1985.

Goals from Bayern Munich's Alphonso Davies on 63 minutes and Lucas Cavallini in injury time gave the Canadians a deserved victory. Indeed, it could have been much worse as Jonathan David, the 19-year-old Gent forward, missed two further golden chances, one in each half.

Following a performance lacking in energy and ideas, the pressure has ramped up on coach Berhalter.

"I think the first thing that stands out to me was desire, the desire of Canada," Berhalter said after the game. "Give them credit. But having said that, the minimum we expect is to match that. We need to compete on every single play in games like this. That's important.

"I don't think it was lack of effort. I don't think it was purposeful. But I wasn't happy with the desire that we displayed tonight to win the soccer game. Too many 50-50 balls we lost, and that hurt us."

> "Today was a new low for Gregg Berhalter and this team. There was no fight, there was no passion, there was no energy"
>
> **Stu Holden, former international turned TV analyst**

But Stu Holden, a former international turned TV analyst was far more critical. "Two-nil and it wasn't even close. That performance was an embarrassment for the US men's national team," he said. "Today was a new low for Gregg Berhalter and this team. There was no fight, there was no passion, there was no energy.

"These are the games when you are ultimately judged. When they were tested, when they were pushed, when they were pressed, when the Canadians were fighting, the United States team didn't show up."

Berhalter, who played for the US at the 2002 World Cup, was appointed in December last year on the back of his work on a budget with Columbus Crew, taking them to the MLS Cup Final in

2015. The US federation conducted a lengthy search but the appointment was criticised, with many highlighting the role of Berhalter's brother Jay, a senior federation executive, in the process.

Berhalter faced criticism for his deployment of defensive midfielder Weston McKennie in an advanced role, while Christian Pulisic was hauled off after an hour. Pulisic, who was reported afterwards to be suffering from flu, was visibly upset on the touchline but insisted he had been keen to play despite a lack of match action at new club Chelsea.

While Canada are clearly making progress with a young team under new coach John Herdman, the USA's defeat in Toronto will only add to calls for under-20 coach Tab Ramos to step up to the senior side.

John Holmesdale

Niklas Sule

Defender's injury a problem for club and country

If Bayern Munich are to claim an eighth consecutive Bundesliga title, they are going to have to do it the hard way. That's the only conclusion to reach after German international centre-back Niklas Sule snapped cruciate ligaments in his left knee in the 2-2 draw away to regional rivals Augsburg.

Sule, who duly underwent an operation to repair the damage is expected to be on the sidelines for at least six months. Indeed, his season may have already run its course.

To a great extent, Bayern's defensive plans revolve around the giant 24-year-old Frankfurter. Since arriving at the Allianz-Arena from Hoffenheim at the start of the 2017-18 season, he has developed into one of Europe's most accomplished stoppers and by common consent, is the champions' main source of back-line steel and physical presence.

Bayern, of course, have plenty of other centre-back options, not least the highly experienced Jerome Boateng and freshly recruited Frenchmen Benjamin Pavard and Lucas Hernandez. But their defensive problems were compounded by an ankle-ligament injury sustained by Hernandez in the Champions League which will sideline the former Atletico Madrid left-back for two months.

But Sule's absence will be the greater loss. He undoubtedly offered the most in terms of solidity and trustworthiness. Ominously, he suffered an identical injury some five years ago while playing for Hoffenheim. On that occasion, he was out for no fewer than 203 days. Repeat procedures on old wounds invariably take longer, so it doesn't bode well.

One man sure to be keeping an anxious eye on Sule's rehabilitation is *Nationalmannschaft* boss Joachim Low.

Arguably, Germany need a fully fit Sule even more than Bayern. The Bundesliga is hardly crawling with high-calibre centre-backs at the moment and Low may come under pressure to offer a volte-face recall to Mats Hummels, whom he controversially ditched in March.

Now back at Borussia Dortmund following a three-year stint with Bayern, Hummels is still only 30 and, frankly, is performing as capably as ever.

Will Low be prepared to eat a slice of humble pie for the greater good?

Nick Bidwell

Agony...injured against Augsburg

eyewitness

Brian Homewood reports from Doha

QATAR

Gulf of uncertainty

For fans, the 2022 World Cup will be an expensive and soulless experience

South American fans have been the life and soul of the party at the last two World Cups, stopping at almost nothing to see their teams play. In 2014, tens of thousands of Argentinians, Chileans and Uruguayans defied Brazil's dismal transport infrastructure by driving to and around the host nation, with many simply sleeping in their vehicles in the streets.

Last year, South Americans again flocked to the tournament and comfortably outnumbered Europeans. Russia may have been distant but it was relatively cheap, not too difficult to get around and its policy of visa-free entry for South Americans meant they could visit even without match tickets.

But will even they decide to give Qatar a miss in 2022?

The Gulf state recently hosted the IAAF World Athletics Championships, where it revealed itself to be an expensive and

Sign of the times...the World Cup logo on display in Doha

FIFA WORLD CUP
Qatar2022

joyless destination, and one that could prove far more difficult to get to.

Visitors discovered a city dominated by cars rather than people and where most of the entertainment seems to be found in shopping malls. The city boasts one small traditional-style souk – and even that has the feel of a filmset and is highly sanitised.

Walking anywhere, apart from along the seven-kilometre Corniche waterfront is a lost cause – and not simply because of the heat. There are few pavements, walking distances are huge and even those that exist have fallen into disrepair and are invariably blocked by cars.

Qatar has sold itself on being a "compact" destination but that is rather misleading. It is certainly a small country, but Doha sprawls like a city in the US Midwest and public transport consists mainly of an impenetrable network of buses aimed at migrant workers.

The Gulf state was named as one of the world's 10 unfriendliest cities for visitors by the *Conde Nast Traveller* magazine in 2016 and online forums for foreign residents are littered with complaints that the city is dull.

"There is a shocking lack of things to do in a city of this size," was a comment on the website *Tales from a Small Planet*. "Families have it best as Doha is geared to those with kids. Even then, I'm told many families spend their weekends like the rest of us: in front of the TV, wishing there was more to do."

Then there is the question of alcohol, which is far more strictly controlled than many visitors might have imagined. It is only sold in a handful of authorised places, mainly five-star hotels, at prices which start at around £65 for an average bottle of wine.

Visitors discovered a city dominated by cars, where most of the entertainment seems to be found in shopping malls

Plan...Education City Stadium is due to be ready by December

Qatar has also become more difficult to get to as the boycott by neighbours Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and United Arab Emirates means flights have to take long diversions around those countries. Qatar Airways, while offering bargains for journeys which use Doha as a connection point, charges a small fortune for those that actually start and finish there. For example, a return flight to Doha from Zurich is 50 per cent more expensive than a return to Windhoek via Doha.

There are no ferries and the only land

Artificial...the island known as The Pearl, which juts out from the city of Doha

Support...Qatar fans

border is shut – not that it would be a feasible option in any case, given the difficulties of getting into neighbouring Saudi Arabia.

Local organisers – the Supreme Committee for the Delivery and Legacy – are adamant that Qatar will surprise the world, just as Germany did in 2006. Nasser Al Khater, chief executive of the 2022 World Cup, promised in a recent interview with a group of reporters that Qatar expected one million fans and there would be plenty to keep them occupied on non-match days.

"When their teams are not playing, there is a lot of things they can do," he said, suggesting they could go to other matches thanks to the proximity of hosting stadiums – though the relatively small capacity of most stadiums may thwart this plan.

Luxury cars...a common sight

Of the eight stadiums, two have been completed: the existing 40,000-capacity Khalifa International Stadium, which was rebuilt for the World Athletics Championships, and the Al Janoub Stadium, whose 40,000 capacity will be reduced by half after the World Cup.

A third arena, Education City Stadium (40,000), is due to be completed by December and will be used for the Club World Cup, while the key Lusail Iconic Stadium (80,000) – which will host the opening ceremony, opening match and Final – is at an "advanced stage" according to organisers.

Of the others, Al Bayt (60,000) is "nearing completion" while Al Rayyan (40,000), is "more than half finished". At Al Thumama (40,000 to be reduced to 20,000 after the World Cup), the stadium's concrete frame is ready and work on the upper-tier stands is nearing completion. The least advanced stadium appears to be Ras Abu Aboud (40,000) which will be constructed with "modular building blocks" and entirely dismantled after the finals.

A shiny new metro, complete with VIP lounges at stations, is planned to connect all the venues, although only a small part of it is open at present and stations themselves are remotely located and not connected to the city's bus network – although there is a discounted taxi service within a certain radius.

Al Khater says a mixture of cruise ships, desert camps and apartment rentals will provide enough accommodation and the organisers recently published a list of "10 things to do in Qatar besides football": stroll along the Corniche; barter at the souk; take a desert safari; visit a museum; "shop until you drop"; visit the Katara cultural village; visit The Pearl; "hit the beach"; visit the "Purple island"; take a trip to the country's first UNESCO heritage site, Al Zubarah Fort.

Al Khater also promised that drinking laws will be relaxed and the price of alcohol would be made affordable.

"Qatar is a conservative country, it's a modest country, alcohol is not part of our culture; however, hospitality is," he said, although how Qataris might react to all-day drinking and potential rowdy behaviour by football supporters – in a country where being drunk is socially unacceptable and where graffiti is unheard of – might be another worry for the organisers. WS

Line-up...Qatar (left) and Oman before their Asian Cup qualifier at Al Janoub Stadium in October

eyewitness

Rumen Paytashev reports from Sofia

BULGARIA

Ugly scenes in Sofia

Widespread resignations after racist abuse during qualifier

Nobody expected such an extraordinary turn of events. It all began several days before Bulgaria's Euro 2020 qualifier in Sofia, when England raised concerns after what had happened in Montenegro back in March, when their black players had been racially abused during a game in Podgorica.

Some England players said they were ready to ignore UEFA's "three steps" protocol and abandon the match in the event of racist chants in Sofia. The Bulgarian Football Union (BFU) president

Borislav Mihaylov sent letters to the FA and UEFA, declaring it "offensive" that Bulgarian fans had been branded as racists ahead of the game.

When the match in the Vasil Levski Stadium was twice stopped before half-time by the Croatian referee Ivan Bebek, almost nobody in the press area understood what was going on. According to Croatian newspaper *Jutarnji List*, Bebek told England boss Gareth Southgate there was no reason to abandon the match.

Later, TV pictures exposed a group of ▸

Nazi salutes... Bulgaria fans at the game

In charge... ref Ivan Bebek

20 to 30 fans giving Nazi salutes, making monkey sounds and wearing TV shirts with the slogan "No Respect" – a variant on the UEFA "Respect" campaign. They also chanted slogans directly against BFU president Mihaylov. At the end of the first half, these people left the stadium and the view of most Bulgarians was that their actions were a deliberate and planned attack by hooligan provocateurs on Mihaylov, who is an unpopular figure.

Mihaylov, whose goalkeeper son Nikolay was among Bulgaria's substitutes, left the stadium 20 minutes before the end so as not to be a witness to the 6-0 defeat, one of the biggest disasters in the history of the national team.

Boyko Borisov, Bulgaria's prime minister was quick to have his say. "I can't accept the insulting comparisons made by the English media that Bulgarians are racists and animals," he said. "We will not comment on the behaviour of the English fans in Sofia, because they are not the face of the English nation.

"The English prime minister Boris Johnson and I condemned the racism, because we are together against racism.

"I told our minister of foreign affairs to inform the English ambassador that we don't agree Bulgaria to be a racist country just because of a group of ragamuffins."

The UEFA match delegate Pavel Klimenko, who is also the Eastern Europe development officer for anti-racist group FARE, announced that some people had entered the stadium dressed in stewards' bibs and then joined the hooligans, who insulted and abused England's black players Raheem Sterling, Marcus Rashford and Tyrone Mings. Later most of the hooligans were identified and the police arrested 16 people.

The next day events took a dramatic turn. In the morning the Bulgarian sports minister, Krassen Kralev, announced that prime minister Borisov wanted to end the government's relationship with the BFU and called for the retirement of its president, Mihaylov. About 1.30pm the BFU press officer insisted Mihaylov would be remaining in his post, but two hours later, on the BFU website, the president announced his resignation.

"For some time I have been considering retirement," Mihaylov said. "Fourteen years is a long time and maybe I am tired. Recent events have created tension. The results of the national team have been weak, but I am not responsible for those. As a goalkeeper I never conceded six goals in a single match.

"It will be difficult to find somebody to replace me as I am the longest-serving leader of Bulgarian football. In Bulgaria they do not like successful people, but I have been a successful president.

"When I began, in 2006, the BFU budget was about €3million, but in 2019 it is more than €9m. My biggest mistake was that I was too good.

"Regarding the racism, the hysteria came from England before the match. That is why I wrote two letters, to the FA and UEFA, telling them we are not a racist country. The events during the match were pre-planned. I cannot agree that a group of 20 or 30 fans can represent the Bulgarian nation."

In a separate move, unconnected with events on the pitch, special police forces raided the offices of the BFU. More than 50 officers took control of computers and documents.

Prime minister Borisov claimed the move had been planned several days earlier and was not connected with events at the game. There have long been doubts and suspicions about fixed

Resignation... Borislav Mihaylov

> "I cannot agree that a group of 20 or 30 fans can represent the Bulgarian nation"
> **BFU president, Borislav Mihaylov**

Warning...England players wait while an appeal is made over the PA system

Message...UEFA Respect campaign is mocked

games and there will now be a criminal trial, with charges of "crimes against sport" and "corrupt crimes". The chief of the BFU referee commission, Yordan Stalev, was interviewed, along with several other members of the commission, but he insisted: "I have not been arrested. I just was called to be interviewed. What did they ask me? Forget about it!"

Three days later, at an extraordinary meeting of ExCo, Mihaylov and all the other ExCo members officially tendered their resignations. Mihaylov was head of the BFU for 14 years and had been a member of UEFA's ExCo since 2011.

Until an extraordinary congress to be held at the start of next year, the provisional president of the BFU will be the current vice-president Mihail Kassabov, who has already declared that he will not be a candidate for the presidency at the Congress.

Calm...England manager Gareth Southgate made his feelings known

National coach Krassimir Balakov also resigned, saying: "Sometimes there are times like this in your life – a man finds himself in a difficult situation. In the last 25-30 years I have done a lot to fight against racism."

The only ExCo member who didn't agree with Balakov's resignation, first vice-president Yordan Lechkov, was the man charged with finding a new national coach and he has turned to former Ludogorets and Levski Sofia boss Georgi Dermendzhiev.

"Bulgaria are not the only team that is losing matches," says Dermendzhiev. "The important thing now is to work hard and do our best to raise the level.

"Regardless of the recent results, I see some spark. I believe we have a chance to qualify for a major championship. This is our goal."

Lechkov's next challenge will be to appoint a new BFU president and it was interesting to note a comment on social media from Dimitar Berbatov, who posted a picture of himself and his agent, Emil Danchev, with the message: "We have been working together for 20 years now ...now working on our next move." WS

eyewitness

Tim Vickery reports from Rio de Janeiro

BRAZIL

All eyes on Santiago

Flamengo and River Plate to meet in Libertadores Final

Last year's Copa Libertadores came to a dramatic and controversial conclusion at the Santiago Bernabeu. This year's Final is set for Santiago, with defending champions River Plate of Argentina taking on Brazil's Flamengo – the most refreshing club to hit South American domestic football for years – on November 23.

But there is a problem. This, of course, is the first year of a one-off showdown in a neutral venue.

Santiago had seemed like the safest of choices – but then Chile erupted in social unrest and a state of emergency was declared. CONMEBOL, the South American Confederation, is watching anxiously, hoping and trusting that things calm down in time. No Plan B has so far been announced, but the most logical alternative would probably be Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay,

Success... Flamengo celebrate

which kicks off the era of neutral venue Finals on November 9 with Argentina's Colon against Independiente del Valle of Ecuador in the Copa Sudamericana.

While the Sudamericana Final is a curious battle of unfashionable sides, the Libertadores is a different case entirely. Last year's winners and four-times champions River Plate are clearly a famous name celebrated all over the world. Outside Brazil, though, the full dimension of Flamengo may not be fully appreciated. A giant club in a giant land, with a truly nationwide support base, the Rio de Janeiro club have been huge underachievers. It is extraordinary that this is only their second Libertadores Final – 38 years after their 1981 triumph.

For decades the club have limped through financial crises, so the first step in their recent rise was to balance the books. Then they went shopping and started to assemble a squad of formidable depth. Finally, in the middle of this year, came the vital part of the jigsaw. With the hiring of Portuguese coach Jorge Jesus, Flamengo had a new, bold idea of play.

The fact that in the previous five years Brazil could only manage one Libertadores Final is a scandal, a declaration of collective incompetence. The country's big clubs have a significant financial advantage over their continental rivals, but it was hard to see it on the pitch.

In 2018 Brazilian club after Brazilian club crashed out of the competition as a consequence of an excess of caution, with defensive lines so deep they were practically on top of the keeper. But Jorge Jesus has put a stop to all that at Flamengo in an exhilarating few months, with the 6-1 aggregate semi-final hammering of compatriots Gremio standing as a high point.

> Flamengo are the most refreshing club to hit South American domestic football for years

Champions in 2017 and appearing in their third consecutive semi-final, Renato Portaluppi's Gremio have had a fine run. Operating on a budget far more restricted than that of Flamengo or Palmeiras, they have forged an attractive identity as a possession-based side. But they were blown apart in the semi-final – perhaps even more so in the 1-1 draw at home than the 5-0 capitulation away.

Flamengo's performance in the first half in Porto Alegre was one of the finest by a South American club side for many years. Gremio, who love to have the ball, were hounded and starved of possession. Flamengo, with Spanish centre-back Pablo Mari organising their high defensive line, camped in the opposing half, and with proximity between the sectors of the team, made the ball fizz in a series of rapid and incisive passing movements. They had three goals ruled out. And when Gremio thought they might have weathered the storm, Flamengo took the lead in typical style, driving forward in numbers, Gerson feeding playmaker Giorgian De Arrascaeta, whose cross to the far post was headed home by Bruno Henrique.

Bold...Flamengo coach Jorge Jesus

But as the game wore on Flamengo's press lost some of its intensity, and Gremio started to find space. They crafted a late equaliser when Maicon played a neat pass to winger Everton, and his whipped ball across the face was turned in from close range by sub Pepe.

Gremio breathed a sigh of relief, hoping that Flamengo had missed their big chance. Twice earlier in the competition, after a disastrous start in the group phase and then in the previous round when they needed two goals away to Palmeiras, Gremio had dug themselves out of a hole.

For the return match a packed Maracana was expectant but nervous; signed up for the journey but unsure of where it might lead.

For a while the nerves seemed justified. Flamengo had most of the ball but Gremio had the clearest chance, Everton getting behind their defence and setting up a chance for Maicon, who was just foiled by fine covering from left-back Filipe Luis. And then, between the 43rd and 72nd minutes, Flamengo scored five times to set off the party.

Bruno Henrique began the rout shortly before half-time, setting up Gabriel and following up to tap in a blocked shot. Soon after the interval Gabriel effectively decided matters with a superb left-footed

volley on the swivel after a corner had been half cleared, and he soon had another from the penalty spot. Then the centre-backs got into the act, with Mari and Rodrigo Caio both glancing home from set-pieces.

In truth, there were basic defensive errors in all of the goals, with Gremio captain Pedro Geromel enduring a very unhappy evening at centre back. But the mistakes were forced by an attacking machine operating at the top if its game – one that highly rated River Plate coach Marcelo Gallardo must now work out how to stop.

River's 2-1 aggregate win over Boca Juniors was nowhere near as emphatic as Flamengo's triumph, but there was no doubt that the better side prevailed – and thankfully there was no repeat of last year's off-field problems.

Gallardo's task in the home first leg was to break down a disciplined Boca defence that had held on in relative comfort for a goalless draw in a recent league game. River concentrated on width, trying to get outside and behind the Boca back four, and were quickly rewarded when, with the aid of VAR, they won a penalty, converted by Rafael Santos Borre. The second goal was a thing of beauty, a collective move down the right ending in a close range finish from Nacho Fernandez.

Boca had shown depressingly little. Coach Gustavo Alfaro has a wealth of experience, but almost all of it has been acquired with relatively small clubs, and his cautious approach had not served him well in the first leg. Back in the Bombonera he would have to try something more expansive. Perhaps bowing to crowd pressure he opted to start with Carlos Tevez, who combined well but offered little threat to the goal. Mauro Zarate, Boca's top scorer in the competition, would surely have offered more. Boca tried hard and managed to stifle River's fluid attacking game, but their only hope appeared to come from set-pieces hit into the penalty area. River struggled to deal with the threat and there was late drama when one such free-kick ended up with burly Venezuelan substitute striker Jan Hurtado forcing the ball over the line. But Boca never looked to possess the attacking repertoire to retrieve a two goal deficit.

Flamengo, of course, offer a very different challenge. Their high line means that they are often attacking with eight players: full-backs Rafinha and Filipe Luis constructing from deep, Willian Arao and Gerson offering lung power and versatile quality in midfield, and then that front four – Everton Ribeiro and De Arrascaeta provide the playmaking subtleties, with the strike duo of Gabriel and Bruno Henrique moving across the line and attacking pockets of space.

The gameplan of the Brazilians, then, would seem obvious and they will look to take control. Less clear is Gallardo's response. In his long spell with River he has developed the capacity to work with a number of different formations. In the first leg of last year's Final, for example, he sprung a surprise by lining up with three centre-backs.

He will clearly examine his options, but one things is a given: Gallardo will surely expect Santos Borre to run in behind the Flamengo defence. And if they can hold the Brazilians at bay and wait for the intensity of the press to diminish, space could open up for Colombian playmaker Juan Fernando Quintero, back from injury, who could come off the bench to take advantage.

It is not easy to see how River can defend against Flamengo. But the defending champions will hope that big match experience and a canny coach might tip things their way. WS

Holders...River Plate will defend their trophy in Chile

Semi-final...Pablo Mari (left) heads home as Gremio struggle to hold Flamengo (above)

LIONEL MESSI

"I want to win the Champions League again"

After being presented with a record sixth ESM Golden Shoe, the Barcelona star sat down to talk frankly about his life and career

What did your children say to you when they were there and saw you win the award?
They were happy. The truth is that they were a little tired in the end because the gala was long. But they were very happy and were looking forward to [me] winning the award so that they could go up [on stage], be with me and enjoy it. It was a spectacular moment.

What did they say about the other players?
They know everyone and the truth is everyone likes them because they are passionate about football. They watch the matches of all the teams, not only those of Barcelona or Argentina. They were really freaked out looking at everyone because they knew them from the cards and from seeing them in matches. They were a little shy but enjoyed themselves.

Is Antonela still excited to see you up there?
Whenever I have to receive these awards and accolades she enjoys it very much. And this time it was special because the whole family was there ...well, almost everyone because Ciro was missing.

What do you admire most about Antonela?
The truth is that [I admire] everything. She has many good qualities: how she gets by on a daily basis, her personality, she is always in a good mood and she always faces up to problems in an admirable way. She is a very intelligent person who is great in all aspects of life.

How do you think your children will be when they grow up?
It is hard to say now. They are still very young. As they grow they will find their space with the things that they enjoy. It is very difficult to say today because life has lots of twists and turns.

When you look back, what do you feel about your career?
In this profession there is not much time to stop and think about the past. We live day by day and focus more on what is to come rather than what we have achieved. In football, unfortunately, you enjoy things just a little because every three days you encounter a new challenge and other targets. When I retire I will be able to remember and admire what I have achieved much more.

Are you are a more confident person?
Obviously, you grow and learn [as you get older]. You add experiences in all aspects of life, on and off the pitch. As a human being, having three children made me change my perspectives on life, my way of thinking and also growing up.

Do children's tantrums help them grow up?
Of course, it is good that there are tantrums, activity and joy inside the house, although sometimes it is a bit excessive.

Do they realise when you are injured?
Now they understand what it means to be injured. They ask me how long it will take for me to return. Normally they call me all the time to play, to have a game or shoot a few shots. But they know when I'm injured I can't. Sometimes they forget. "It is true you can't, you're injured," they tell me when they realise. They understand what it means.

What is your favourite Spanish dish?
I always said that it's roast, milanesa [breaded meat fillet] or pasta. The type of food that I like is something very simple.

Your Barcelona team-mate Gerard Pique has revealed that he once ate half a Nutella jar. Do you have any such habits?
A little chocolate, milk sweets or ice cream. Anything that is sweet could work. I try to eat little of it, but I do like it.

When relaxing at home with the family, what do you like to do?
There are few moments of relaxation at home with three children! We try to experience the moments and enjoy every second with the children, whether it is watching TV, playing or doing anything with them. We stay at home a lot and enjoy these moments.

Which TV shows do you like watching? What about with the children?
We are not watching much [terrestrial] TV, we are more into series. But when we are with them we watch cartoons or movies that they like because they are the ones who are in charge.

You are a fan of *Games of Thrones*. Did you like the ending?
The truth is that it was not what I expected; I

Timing...taking on Virgil Van Dijk

imagined something else. I'm a fan of the series and the ending left me a bit like that [expecting something else]...

How do you like your mate, the traditional South American caffeine-rich drink?
I like a hot and bitter mate. I used to drink it sweet, but then I got used to the bitterness and I drink it like that.

Don't you drink coffee?
I used to drink a lot, but I quit a while ago.

Thiago doesn't, neither does Mateo, but does Ciro prefer to kick the ball with his left foot?
Not at all. I didn't get any left-footed kids! He is also right-footed.

The two eldest boys are crazy about football. Do they play in a particular position?
Not yet. The truth is that they are very small; they have no determined position. They like to score goals and be close to the goal, like all the kids, but at that age they all run behind the ball without knowing very well what position they have.

Does the dog take part in the games they play at home?
No way...at least we try not to because he is too big, too rough and he breaks the ball!. Or unintentionally he throws himself on top [of the ball] and he has huge legs. It's difficult, so we try to leave him out.

Do you like to take the dog for a walk?
We go out from time to time. [But] not much because it is complicated to go out with the dog all together.

Do you have any habits?
I have many. Before going to sleep I like to leave the table ready for the next morning. And that during breakfast everyone is always in their place, in the same place. And when I get home I take off my shoes right away, and if I'm confident with others I also do it at their home. And then I also have others that I prefer to keep to myself.

Winning Golden Shoes is a habit. Do you dream of continuing to win it?
I dream of continuing to win trophies at club level. I want to win the Champions League again. This is the challenge we have: to add one more Champions League to the showcase, and this leads to individual awards.

When you win such a prize, how many messages do you get on your mobile phone?
Many. In the last [case] there were about 300. There were some people who I did not know that they had my number and they congratulated me.

Are you addicted to your mobile phone?
More or less. I like it. At home we try to leave it and do things together and not be crazy with our mobiles.

Talk to us about Mateo...
He is very special. He is continually doing new things or behaviours that attract attention, but all three [boys] are special and each has his own personality and things [that make them who they are]. The three are very different.

Mateo is already a character...
Yes, but if I talk a lot about him, then the others throw it back in my face.

Well, tell use about Thiago. How is he?
Thiago, despite his age as he will turn seven now, is a very mature and very intelligent person. He is

Record...with his six ESM Golden Shoe awards

a gentleman. And Ciro is similar to Mateo, or maybe worse, we'll see.

Despite having won everything, the Puskas prize has escaped you. How do you feel?
I always say that individual awards are not my targets. The Best, the Ballon d'Or or the Golden Shoe are not [my targets], and even less the best goal of the year. If I get it it's fine, otherwise everything is OK.

Cristiano Ronaldo and Zlatan Ibrahimovic like to promote themselves. You do not do that. How do you find yourself as a player?
I'd rather people talk about me. I know what I am, what I did and what I can give, but I keep it to myself. People can have their say. I don't like to talk about myself, I like to talk about the collective.

Do you see yourself evolving over time into a midfielder?
I don't know, it depends on how it goes. Now I usually drop myself deeper [on the pitch] to receive and be in contact with the ball and the midfield. I don't know what will happen in the future.

Do you have any idea how long you will continue to play or is it something that you are monitoring?
You realise yourself how long you can continue [playing]. I'll find out over time. I'll be the first to say I've come this far and I can't do it anymore or that I feel good to carry on. Over the years I will find that out.

There is an open debate in Germany about who should be their first-choice keeper. Who do you think is the best goalkeeper between Marc-Andre Ter Stegen and Manuel Neuer, and what are their main skills?
They are two great goalkeepers. They are goalkeepers with similar characteristics. They read the play very well, they could play with their feet like midfielders and they are very fast between the sticks. I know Marc well and I can talk about him, but I don't see Neuer training and I don't usually watch his matches, but I think they are generally two similar goalkeepers.

This year you have missed some games due to injury. How do you feel now that your body is asking for more breaks?
It is difficult because your mind is fine; you think that you are 25-years old and that you can continue doing the same things [as before] at the time. But the body rules and there are circumstances in which you have to be more careful than before. Adapting to it requires a process and preparing differently for training and matches.

What is the difference between Pep Guardiola's Barcelona and the current one?
The truth is that it has been a long time since then. There are many new players; I think we only have three or four from that era. The team was transforming and adapting to the players we had each season.

What are Frenkie De Jong's best qualities and how is your understanding with him on the pitch?
It has been easy for him to adapt to the team because he came from a similar philosophy at Ajax. He grew up with the same idea and the same way of playing, although there he did not have much to play as an "anterior" [slightly further ahead in midfield than the holding midfielder]. As a pivot [or holding midfielder] he feels more comfortable, but he has adapted well. He likes to have the ball, play short passes, play passes between the lines, and he has a very fast and strong stride. He is a complete footballer.

Happy...with both Barcelona the club and the city

Why is it so difficult to beat a player like Virgil Van Dijk?
He is a defender who knows how to judge his timing and wait for the right moment to challenge or jockey [the attacker]. He is very fast and big, but he has a lot of agility for his height. He is fast because of his great stride, and he is impressive both in defence and attack because he scores lots of goals.

Cristiano Ronaldo always recommends leaving your comfort zone of Barcelona and looking for other leagues, as he has done four times. Will you listen to him?
Everyone looks for their targets and their experiences. I never had the need to leave the best club in the world, that Barcelona are, and where I enjoy training, games and the city. [The city to club dynamic] is very complete and I was always sure about the targets at this club [rather than going to] look for it elsewhere.

Were you surprised by Antonio Conte's Inter in this season's Champions League?
I wasn't surprised because we knew what we were going to see. I had seen them in the Italian league, where they started very well, and they are fighting Juventus as equals, which is not easy. We had studied them before facing each other and we knew that they are a very tidy team who play with heart and many automatisms, and that they were going to be a very difficult opponent.

Interview by Juan Ignacio Gallardo/ESM

Family...with his wife and two of their boys at the presentation

Premier League rejects

Nick Bidwell on the players who failed to impress in England

1 Peter GULACSI

RB LEIPZIG

The Hungarian international, widely regarded as the best No1 in the Bundesliga at the moment, was not always first choice. In five years with Liverpool he was either to be found in the reserves, on the senior bench or out on loan at Hereford United, Tranmere Rovers and Hull City.

Such is the lot of third-choice keepers at this level: good enough to be considered for inclusion in 41 first-team matchday squads, but not once deployed.

After some much-needed playing time on joining Salzburg in June 2013, two years later he moved to Red Bull sister club Leipzig, where he became their main man midway through the 2015-16 season.

At 29, he demonstrates excellent positioning and command of his box, and was the Bundesliga clean sheet king last season, racking up no fewer than 16 shut-outs.

2 Angel DI MARIA

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN

The Argentinian winger cut a depressing figure in his sojourn at Manchester United in 2014-15. Apart from a few early fireworks, the ex-Real Madrid star generally seemed to be playing under sufferance, fighting a losing battle with communication problems and having a poor working relationship with manager Louis Van Gaal.

El Fideo ("The Noodle") could not quit Old Trafford quickly enough and, now in his fifth season at PSG, he loves the Parisian life.

For the past 18 months, the 31-year-old has been in superb form for the French champions and recently underlined his state of grace with a brace in the 3-0 victory over former club Real Madrid in the Champions League.

PSG's German coach Thomas Tuchel has managed to bring out the best in Di Maria and these days makes a point of according the Argentinian the same lofty status as Kylian Mbappe, Neymar and Edinson Cavani.

3 Jason DENAYER

LYON

Given Manchester City's well-documented problems in central defence, decision-makers at the Etihad Stadium must harbour more than a few regrets about letting the 24-year-old Belgian international slip through their fingers.

The Brussels native was on City's books for five years but did not start a competitive match and found himself locked in a loan-move spiral, twice featuring at Galatasaray, as well as being farmed out to Celtic and Sunderland. He was a domestic league winner with Celtic and Gala, and in 2015 he was voted Scotland's Young Player of the Year.

Since moving to Lyon for €6.5m in August 2018 he has emerged as a genuine leader too and was appointed captain this season.

He came through the Jean-Marc Guillou Academy near Antwerp, where in order to hone technique the students were forced to train barefoot.

4 Chuba AKPOM

PAOK

After the pain of not making the transition from Arsenal academy to first-team glory, the 24-year-old finally seems to have located a real home at reigning Greek champions PAOK.

Last season, his first following a £900,000 move, he took a while to get into his stride, but after Aleksandar Prijovic was sold to Saudi side Al Ittihad in January, he led the line with verve and craft, sealing his cult-hero status with an acrobatic winner in the Greek Cup Final against AEK.

Although he represented England at several different youth levels earlier in his career, he took the decision this autumn to pledge his international allegiance to Nigeria, the homeland of his parents.

5 Nikola VLASIC

CSKA MOSCOW

In his one and only season with Everton, who he joined from Hajduk Split in a £9.7m deal in August 2017, the Croat attacking midfielder or winger sank without trace, only starting 10 games in all competitions and scoring just twice.

The Premier League can be a most unforgiving of sporting environments and he was simply too raw to deliver.

The only option he had was to make a tactical retreat, and since moving to CSKA – initially on loan and then signing permanently this summer – it has all worked out splendidly for the 22-year-old.

Unlike at Everton, CSKA coach Viktor Goncharenko plays him in his preferred number 10 position and the team's fast, creative style most definitely suits him. He looks a far more mature player than he ever did at Everton: vocal, authoritative and ultra-confident – hence Goncharenko's decision to hand him the captain's armband on occasion.

6 Jordan VERETOUT

ROMA

Wanted by both Leicester City and Aston Villa, Veretout's decision to swap Ligue 1 for the latter in the summer of 2015 would backfire spectacularly, with Villa ending up relegated and Leicester making history as champions.

He made next to no impact at Villa and fared little better on loan at Saint-Etienne. However, two years with Fiorentina restored his reputation and the 26-year-old midfielder was hot property again this summer.

Pursued by Napoli and Milan, he ultimately opted for a loan move to Roma, who have the right to buy him at the end of this season for €18m.

In the France side that won the world Under-20 title in 2013, he can play as a holder, in box-to-box mode or as a number 10.

Facetoface

BOB BRADLEY

"I'm not afraid of any challenge. I've gone places that other people wouldn't have gone near"

The former USA and Egypt coach's trailblazing career took him to Norway, France and the Premier League before a successful return to MLS

Los Angeles have won the Supporters' Shield for the team with the best overall record in this year's regular MLS season, shattering a host of records in the process. It must be a lot of fun...
It's been great, every part of LAFC: the stadium, the fans. There were a group of people that were on board before there was a team that created incredible momentum and energy in the city. And we are so excited to feel like we're part of something special.

Last season was the team's first and you got to the play-offs. How did you step things up this year?
The first season we played a lot of good football but I think we were a team that wasn't always consistent over 90 minutes. There were times when we conceded too easily, where we could have won a game and instead took only a point. But I think the overall way that we go about it – our ideas, to try to push up the field, to press, to win the ball high, to create chances – I think we continue to grow in all those ways. I think the players love the way we play. We know that our supporters appreciate that kind of football.

You won the MLS Cup with Chicago Fire in 1998 when the competition was still in its infancy. How has MLS changed?
MLS has certainly changed in the fact that there's so many more teams. I think we see teams that have identities, incredible new stadiums. The way a lot of different players have come from outside and the way American players have continued to develop. They all go together in a good way so we're excited to see the way the league continues to develop. But it has to continue to be challenged the right way. Every league needs more teams that play with an identity. Every team needs more really good games where teams go on the field and go after each other.

Have you noticed a marked improvement in the standard of play?
The standard has improved but it would be unfair to look back on certain teams. We had a great team in Chicago and we played really good football, and Chicago is a great sports city. The league has grown in numbers and that, of course, tests quality. I do go back to the fact that it's important to see more and more teams have an identity, to have an idea of how they want to play football, have a connection with their supporters. I don't think that was always the case in the early years of MLS. And, being honest, I don't think that's true with all teams in MLS at the moment. But I do think that there's more of that going on and I think that's the only way that you can really grow the game. I think in the best leagues in the world different teams have different strategies, different ideas. I love that in a league like La Liga you've got big teams and then you still have a club like Athletic Bilbao that is so committed to its Basque traditions and has an incredible stadium in the heart of the city. When I visited there they talked about the fact that their philosophy is an advantage because any kid that comes through their system knows he's going to have a chance to play for the first team. So, rather than complaining that other teams have big budgets, they take great pride in what they are and they try to build on that. And I think that's the kind of example that we need throughout MLS so that every team can figure things out for itself.

What does this mean in terms of LAFC?
LA is a very diverse city. The idea from the beginning was to try to be a diverse team, a diverse club, to have this idea that it was inclusive. And, for me, everything started with that. And then the challenge when I arrived was to make sure that we had put together a team – of course, to do that you need the right staff and then the right people around you – to represent all that, and one that could go on the field and make the supporters proud with the way we play football, with the commitment that we have to them. And so we're early in all this but it's been exciting to be part of it. And the feeling that the coaches and the players have, every time we have a home game, every time we go into Banc of California Stadium, every time we see the faces of the men, women, boys, girls, brothers, sisters, grandfathers, grandmothers – that part of our crowd tells us everything.

How does the atmosphere in MLS compare to other countries in which you've worked?
The atmosphere of LAFC is up there with the best. I've been fortunate not only to travel as a coach but to also go to some incredible ➤

stadiums and see matches where there's an incredible atmosphere. LAFC has an amazing advantage with the location of the stadium right next to the Coliseum, right in the city. I love when clubs have a stadium that's right in the heart of a city. That is still something that sets it apart from other clubs. Most importantly for me, the playing surface is fantastic. Instead of using the half-time to just do sponsorship things, we water the field so that the second half has fast field where the football can be excellent.

LAFC has quite a Hollywood ownership. How often does someone like Will Ferrell come into the dressing room?
We are lucky that occasionally some will pop their heads in the locker room before the game. But they also are very quiet in the way they support the team. Will's amazing because the Will Ferrell that we see on the big screen [is different]. First and foremost he loves the game, and he's very clever with the way he handles things. He's funny, but in a very subtle way.

When you started at LAFC, was there one player you wanted in particular?
It was Carlos Vela, because we felt that the first player would make a statement about everything. Of course, Los Angeles has an incredible Mexican-American community, but we also knew that bringing Carlos was a statement. He is still at a good age, when he got here he was 28. He was an attacking player that could score goals, he could go by people, dribble, create, hit free-kicks. And I think when we signed Carlos it was a statement that the connection with our fans, with the city, was important and that it made it very clear what kind of football we want to play.

> "When we signed Carlos [Vela] it was a statement that the connection with our fans, with the city, was important"

Creation... surveying his work as LAFC (in black) take on New England Revolution

You haven't gone for the big names, like LA Galaxy who've got Zlatan Ibrahimovic. Was that a conscious decision?
We've had discussions about all kinds of players and certainly there might be a time when the right experienced player joins us. But we also were very committed to finding young talent and trying to scout and find players that would come to LA and become stars. Los Angeles is a city of stars. The one example I use over and over is that when Kobe Bryant came to the Lakers he was 18-years old and he wasn't a star. But he became a star right in front of everybody's eyes.

Important...Carlos Vela set a new MLS record this season with 34 goals in the regular season

In 2016 you managed Swansea City in the Premier League for just 11 games. Do you look back on that as a worthwhile experience where you learned something or are you still disappointed at how it worked out?
I learned a lot. I'm disappointed at how it worked out. Like anybody, I think of things that maybe I might have done different. But I knew that type of opportunity and challenge wouldn't happen all the time. I understand football. It's all about points and results. And in the short run sometimes you just need the points in order to have a platform to grow. But you can do everything right and not get points, and you can do everything wrong and get points. When I talk about mistakes, perhaps in the short run, if we had gone in and focused more on defensive shape and set-pieces, maybe we would have taken more points in the short run. But I didn't feel that in the long run that was the way to play football. Maybe that group of players, after they had already played seven or eight games, maybe it wasn't conducive to that. I've had people who told me that I made a mistake to go there. But look, I enjoyed the challenge. I'm disappointed. You know, I'm always honest. If you don't get the points then you fail.

Do you think you broke a barrier for other American coaches or reinforced a prejudice that many may have about American coaches and players?
Whether I helped future American coaches or hurt them, I'm not sure. I'd like to think I helped. But, having said that, the media is difficult. And there are a lot of things written. But I must say, wherever you go, there's media that you never see. There's media that turns up headlines and writes stories from the basements and what not. I just decided I was going to try to be as honest as I could all the time. When I got there very quickly I couldn't get my arms around everything and get results. And then the results are down to

Challenge...his job as Swansea boss lasted just 11 games

the fact that I don't think at that time there were enough good players there. Now, I got in trouble for saying that. I think there were people that felt I didn't believe in the team. Those behind-the-scenes comments were only made as an evaluation because I went in with the idea that we would then have a chance to improve in the transfer window. I had given some names that I thought were positive for transfers but I didn't have the time.

What was the best example that illustrated the kind of press you got?
The biggest one was when someone said behind the scenes the players called me Ronald Reagan. I don't think there was a player at Swansea at that time who even knew who Ronald Reagan was. So that was an interesting creation.

Would you like to go back to Europe? Or do you feel that maybe you've got a good thing going on at LAFC because you built something from scratch and want see it through to its conclusion?
Hundred per cent. I love what's going on at LAFC. The opportunity to take your ideas and your experiences and turn it into something special. Look, we're not there yet, but I love every part of it. For me, the best coaches in all sports are really good at challenging even experienced players to see the game a little differently, to see how they can maybe do things a little bit better. And so I've done that throughout my career. I've been really fortunate, I've coached some big players. Hristo Stoichkov in Chicago [Fire], Youri Djorkaeff in New York [Red Bulls], Claudio Suarez at Chivas USA. [Former Egypt international Mohamed] Aboutrika, one of the greatest guys that I've had a chance to coach.

It doesn't sound like you've given up on one day going back to Europe...
Look, I love challenges. I love the game. I'm not afraid of any challenge. You know, I've gone places that other people wouldn't have gone near. I'm not afraid of failing. The game is there every day to try to challenge players, to try to go on the field, to try to play great football, to try to get great results. And if you're afraid of that, if you fail and you don't get off the ground, you get nowhere. I love what's going on in LAFC. Who knows what the future brings.

Interview by James Montague

Fan...Will Ferrell (in white cap) is a part-owner of LAFC

TOMORROW'S STARS TODAY

Talentscout

TEENAGE TYROS

WORDS: Nick Bidwell

Eduardo CAMAVINGA

Rennes

In a sentence
A 16-year-old Ligue 1 phenomenon, the precocious Rennes defensive midfielder had tongues wagging all over Europe with a masterclass in August's 2-1 win against Paris Saint-Germain.

What they say
Jo Burel, his coach at Drapeau-Fougeres: "It's the first time I've seen a player with such qualities. He had extraordinary talent. When we needed to hang on to a result we'd put him in defence. If we were out for the win he'd play in attack."

Landry Chauvin, former Rennes academy manager: "He's of the same calibre as Ousmane Dembele. I can imagine him taking a similar career trajectory."

Story so far
Born in Angola to Congolese parents, he moved with his family to France when he was a toddler, initially living in Lille, then moving to the Breton town of Fougeres.

He joined local outfit Drapeau shortly after starting school and five years later was inducted into Rennes' academy.

At the age of 15 he was playing for the club's reserve side and he was barely 16 when he signed his first professional contract. He made his first-team debut in April in a Ligue 1 encounter at Angers, coming off the bench to become the youngest player in Rennes' history at 16 years, 4 months and 27 days.

He completed the 2018-19 campaign with two more substitute appearances and three very promising starts for the first team, and also helped Rennes under-17s to the national title. This term he has been ever-present for the Breton club and was voted Ligue 1's player of the month for August.

The next step
It's only a matter of time before the boy wonder goes on to bigger and better things. Barcelona technical secretary Eric Abidal is thought to have fallen under the teenager's charm, while Spanish daily *Marca* reports that Real Madrid are keeping a beady eye on him, with Arsenal, Manchester United and Borussia Dortmund also in the recruitment mix.

Rennes, who recently extended his contract until June 2022, would be delighted if they could keep him for another couple of seasons.

Strengths
His distribution is good and he is quick to break forward from deep positions. He is equally proficient as a holding midfielder or box-to-box player.

Weaknesses
A certain lack of hard-nosed aggression in his defensive work. On occasion, his body language can give the impression of nonchalance.

3 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT CAMAVINGA

- As a youngster he preferred judo to football. His mother had to convince him to join his first club, Drapeau-Fougeres.
- Despite his years of residence, he is not yet a French citizen and still has an Angolan passport.
- Physically he is still growing. Since the start of this season he has grown four centimetres in height, an increase which has led to him to complain of back pain.

> "He's of the same calibre as Ousmane Dembele. I can imagine him taking a similar career trajectory"
> **Landry Chauvin, former Rennes academy manager**

Takefusa KUBO

Mallorca
The Japanese playmaker or winger proved an instant hit this summer on joining Real Madrid from Tokyo and in pre-season was often his new side's most impressive performer. He is now on a single-season loan deal at Mallorca, forced into exile by Real's excess of non-EU players. Once in Barcelona's academy but lost his place when the Camp Nou club violated FIFA's international transfer rules.

Kevin DENKEY

Nimes
After losing many of their best players in the summer, the *Nimois* needed new heroes to step up – and the Togolese front man did just that, particularly with his supersub scoring exploits. Against Monaco in August he netted just 60 seconds after coming on and the following week, versus Brest, he was even quicker to strike.

Mohammed SALISU

Valladolid
Signed from the African Talent Football Academy in Ghana for a mere €50,000 two years ago, the central defender was promoted to the first team this summer and has settled effortlessly into top-flight life, especially unyielding in draws with Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid.

Sergino DEST

Ajax
In his first season as a starter, the right-back has made light work of the transition from reserve team to Champions League. Attack-conscious, technically good and totally without fear, he has already played twice for the senior USA side in friendlies – through his American father – but the Holland-born teenager has also held talks with the Dutch federation.

Levent MERCAN

Schalke
The central midfielder recently marked his debut with a goal in the DFB Cup against SV Drochtersen/Assel. Energetic and extremely self-assured, he has come a long way since Bochum released him seven years ago, telling him he was too small and slight of build.

Romario BARO

Porto
An instrumental figure in Porto's triumph in last season's UEFA Youth League, the Portuguese under-21 normally plays on the right side of midfield for his club but can operate anywhere, with experience as an engine-room enforcer, second striker or classic number 10. He appears to have all the bases covered: quick, skilful, athletic, strong in the air and tenacious.

Marash KUMBULLA

Verona
Italy-born Albanian international centre-back who is enjoying a fine rookie campaign in Serie A. Verona coach Ivan Juric stunned many when choosing to pick the 19-year-old in the opening game of the season against Bologna, but the naysayers are now firm disciples.

Killian SARDELLA

Anderlecht
One of the few positive notes in Anderlecht's disastrous start to the season under new coach Vincent Kompany. Brought up in the club's youth ranks as a central defender, he has been learning on the job this term, carving out a niche for himself at right-back in the first team. The son of an Italian father and Congolese mother.

WHIRLW

THE SMALL SKINNY TEEN WITH SPINDLY LEGS IS NOW

Jurgen Streppel, the former coach of Dutch side Willem II is one tough cookie. And he needs to be, condemned to be forever known as the man who once turned his nose up at the golden goose; who just a few years ago, while in charge at Willem, declared future Barcelona and Holland midfield sensation Frenkie De Jong surplus to requirements.

De Jong spent 10 years in the Willem academy system – which they run jointly with nearby RKC Waalwijk – but he made just three substitute appearances for the Tilburg club, with the hard-nosed Streppel deeming the teenager too callow to pass muster in the lower reaches of the Eredivisie.

Earlier in his senior career it had all looked so good for De Jong. Labelled a Willem youth-scheme class act, he was handed his first professional contract ▸

THE FUTURE OF BARCELONA'S MIDFIELD

DE RIJKE

WORDS: Nick Bidwell

at the tender age of 16 and made his first-team debut in May 2015, earning a move to Dutch giants Ajax, who promptly sent him back on loan to Willem for the 2015-16 campaign.

Then came the collision with harsh reality as Streppel decided to park him in the reserves. Little wonder De Jong looked so frustrated at the time: being sufficiently impressive to be drafted into the Ajax fold, but only an afterthought further down the food chain at Willem. Something had to give, and in the end the loan was aborted, the teen returning to Amsterdam in December 2015.

To be fair to Streppel, the youth-development business is not an exact science and at that point the Willem boss simply could not have imagined that De Jong would emerge as one of Europe's most promising young schemers, become of ever-increasing importance to the national team and be the subject of a €75million move to Barca.

Hard-nosed... Jurgen Streppel

> "I thought he wasn't quite ready. Sorry Frenkie, that I didn't let you play every minute"
>
> **Former Willem II boss Jurgen Streppel**

From Streppel's perspective all that would have been science fiction.

"It's simple," Streppel explained to *De Telegraaf* newspaper in self-justification mode. "He was an awesome player. I had him train with the first team around 15 times and you could see his wonderful range of qualities.

"The problem was we were struggling against relegation, so other players were selected. Frenkie was far from the player he is today. I find it tremendous what he's doing now."

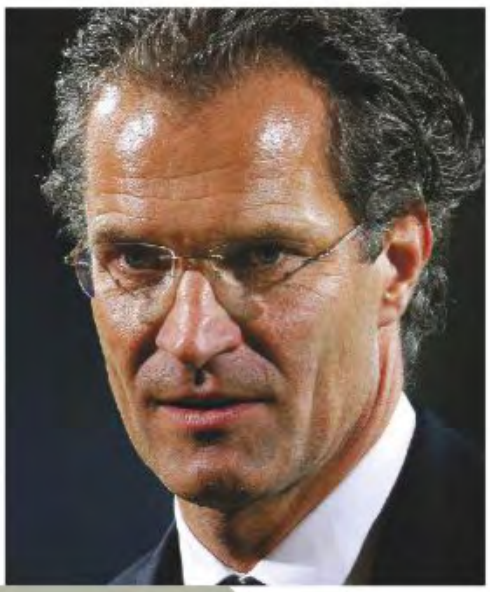
Streppel would later declare in an interview on NPO Radio: "Us coaches have to make choices. I thought he wasn't quite ready. Sorry Frenkie, that I didn't let you play every minute."

However, many other coaches and decision-makers at Willem saw De Jong through a completely different prism, that of the brilliant boy wonder. Jos Bogers, who had him under his wing with the club's under-15s still loves to wax lyrical about the game awareness which the youngster displayed back then. "It seemed as if he saw things before everyone else," he recalls.

Ex-Willem managing director Berry Van Gool, a one-time banker of no little eloquence, remains particularly critical of the part Streppel played in keeping the youngster boxed in. "I was enormously disappointed that Frenkie virtually played no first-team games for us," he claimed in a piece in the *Brabants Dagblad* paper in December 2017. "He's the biggest talent we've had here. I'm a football lover. You want to see such players in the starting line-up, on the pitch. Yet nothing clicked between Jurgen Streppel and him. However, I'm not the coach."

One of Streppel's former assistants at Willem, Dirk Heesen, offers an interesting take on the reasons for De Jong's lack of game time. He suggests that Frenkie was too "frivolous" for their liking, too

Disappointed...Berry Van Gool



Early days...playing for Willem II against PEC Zwolle

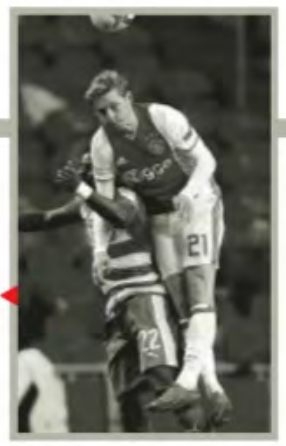
Timeline

MAY 10, 2015
Makes Eredivisie debut, as a sub for Willem II at home to ADO Den Haag.

AUG 22, 2015
Signs a four-year deal with Ajax and is loaned back to Willem II a day later.

SEP 21, 2016
Makes his first-team debut for Ajax, against Willem II in the KNVB Cup.

NOV 24, 2016
Plays in continental club competition for the first time, as a sub, as Ajax beat Panathinaikos 2-0 in the Europa League.



FEB 12, 2017
Makes his league debut for Ajax, as a sub against Sparta Rotterdam.

MAR 24, 2017
Makes his debut for Holland under-21s, against Finland.

18+

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

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inclined to run with the ball and go off-piste tactically. These days, the 22-year-old's exceptional dribbling ability is regarded as one of his great strengths. But for those who called the shots at Willem, it was a distinct liability.

"It was an awkward situation," Heesen explains. "On the one hand, Frenkie had super qualities; on the other, his game came with risks.

"We had doubts as to where such a player should line up. It was a tricky one."

Stripping back all the insights and anecdotes, only one conclusion is valid: De Jong and Streppel were simply not on the same wavelength. The latter insisted

Talent...in action for Holland under-18s against Bulgaria

that the youngster would be best used as either a static deep-lying controller or a hard-running midfielder.

But De Jong wanted to be given more playmaking freedom, the space to slalom and invent – and generally do all the things which makes him so special today. The clash was inevitable, with Streppel the conservative versus the young gun with the avant-garde blood running in his veins.

Maybe that's why he only came good at Ajax. There he could play with bravura in a dominant team, rather than scrap it out in a relegation dogfight with Willem.

If Streppel was unwilling to deploy the fledgling De Jong, several other clubs were keen to bring the kid on board.

In the spring of 2015, even before he had made his debut for Willem, several Eredivisie clubs were assiduously tracking

MAY 7, 2017

Scores his first goal for Ajax, in a 4-0 league victory over Go Ahead Eagles.

MAY 24, 2017

Comes on as a late sub as Ajax lose 2-0 to Manchester United in the Europa League Final.

him, including PSV, Heerenveen and Ajax. Frenkie's mother, Marjon Schuchhard, revealed in an interview with the *NRC Handelsblad* newspaper earlier this year that her son was initially keen to wear the blue-and-white stripes of Heerenveen. However, it was PSV who shoved to the front of the queue.

PSV youth scout Rini De Groot very much liked what he saw and the Eindhoven club's then technical director Marcel Brands – who now has a similar role at Everton – wholeheartedly agreed. Talks between PSV and the De Jong camp went well and the outlines of a deal began to take shape – so much so that the boy was even photographed holding a PSV shirt.

But PSV's biggest problem was that Ajax were still lurking with intent. Marc Overmars, Ajax's director of football, had long been an admirer of De Jong and, even with PSV apparently in pole position, he was determined not to be denied.

> "I knew he was the one I had to get and I don't give up"
> **Marc Overmars, Ajax's director of football**

Overmars admits it was a case of love at first sight. "I was watching the Dutch under-16 side and Frenkie, who was 15 at the time, was one of their substitutes," the former Ajax and Holland winger told *Voetbal International* magazine. "That day, he was the only one I really noticed.

"He was a small skinny lad with spindly legs. No one was paying any particular attention to him. Yet something about him struck me. It was the way he received the ball and turned smoothly away.

"That is still his best quality. That was enough for me. I knew he was the one I had to get and I don't give up."

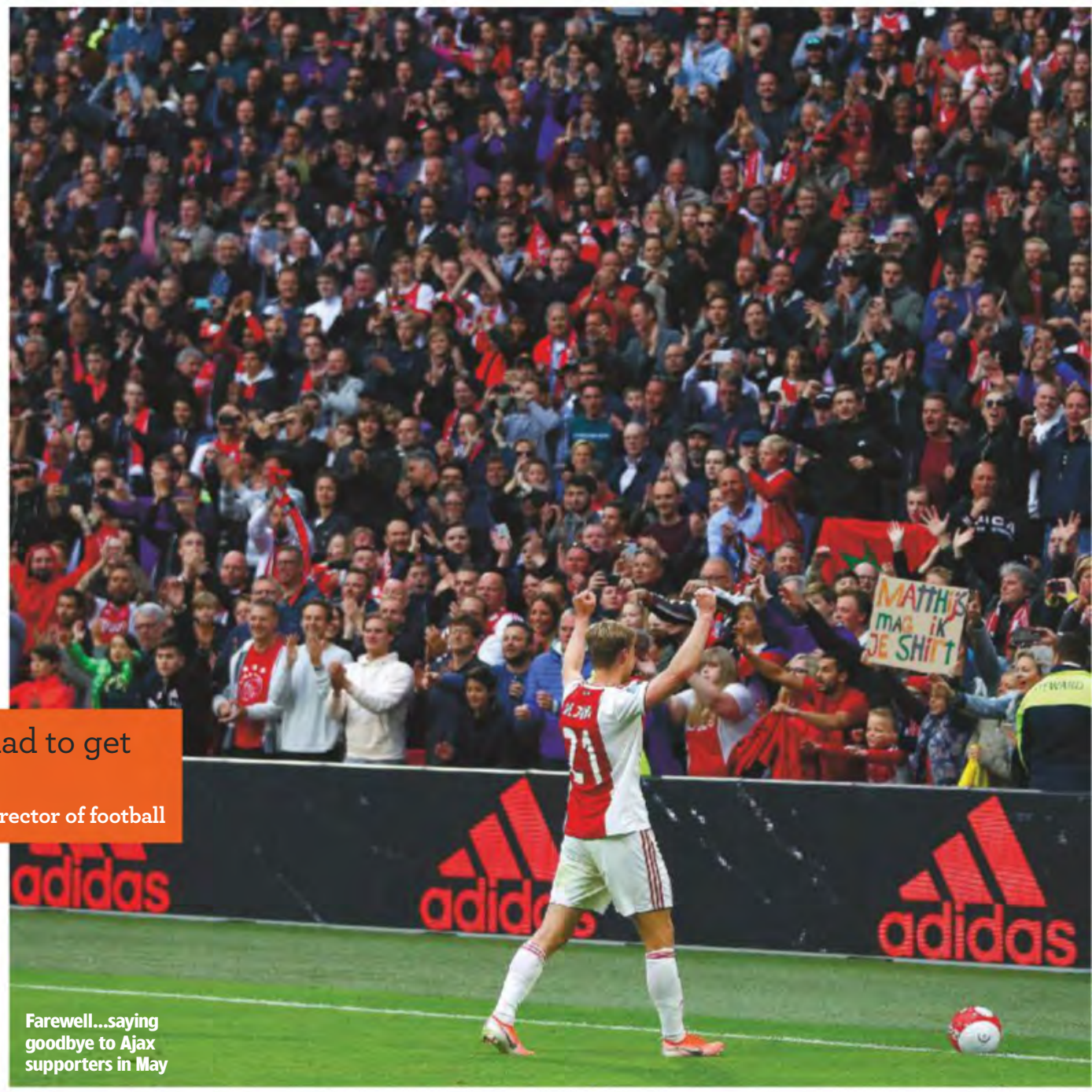
Ajax swiftly rolled out the red carpet for the youngster, inviting him to their training centre and bewitching him with the magic of their history, their outstanding track record in nurturing and promoting young talent, and the string of club figureheads he was introduced to.

Among the welcoming party were first-team coach Frank de Boer, his number two Dennis Bergkamp and reserve-team boss Jaap Stam. In the face of such concerted lobbying, he was not going to resist. But there was still the transfer to negotiate.

Willem wanted €800,000 for the teenager but Ajax thought the price too high. Finally, an unusual compromise was reached. In return for a symbolic transfer fee of just €1, the Amsterdam club pledged to give Willem 10 per cent of Frenkie's resale value. De Jong's recent move to Barcelona therefore meant a substantial payday for Willem. Four years on, Willem's decision to roll the dice, looks an inspired one.

"We took the risk that we could have ended up empty-handed," said Willem's Berry van Gool in *Voetbal International*. "OK, we thought, we'll take that percentage. It was death or glory. All or nothing."

As far as Ajax were concerned, they had pulled off a major coup. Many of



Farewell...saying goodbye to Ajax supporters in May

Young Ajax talent...(top row, from left) Donny Van de Beek, Justin Kluivert, Matthijs De Ligt (bottom row, from left) Abdelhak Nouri, Frenkie De Jong

JUL 26, 2017

Makes his Champions League debut as Ajax draw 1-1 with Nice in France.

NOV 10, 2017

Scores his first goal for Holland under-21s in an 8-0 thrashing of Andorra.

Debut...before Holland's game against Peru

their coaches were swooning over De Jong's ball-playing skills and some were even talking of world-class potential.

But no one was in any hurry either. On his return to Amsterdam following the doomed Willem loan spell he would have to earn his spurs playing in the Dutch second division with the club's reserve side, Jong Ajax.

He would have to be patient too, forced to wait nine months for his senior first-team debut – which ironically came in a 5-0 win over his old club Willem in a Dutch Cup tie in September 2016 – and only becoming a regular starter at the beginning of the 2017-18 season.

Not that this period of De Jong's Ajax apprenticeship was without its highlights: voted the best second-tier rookie, netting his first Eredivisie goal in May 2017 and making a late sub appearance in the Final of the 2017 Europa League Final as Ajax lost 2-0 to Manchester United.

In those early days at Ajax, De Jong could be a little difficult to handle, being too set in his ways and somewhat reluctant to compromise. Peter Bosz, Ajax's coach at the time, took exception to his lack of urgency when the team lost possession, while further brickbats came his way for hanging on to the ball too long and attempting too many high-risk passes. The Ajax method is based on slick one- or two-touch play. De Jong had other, more cavalier, ideas. Like any true Dutchman, he knew better.

"My quality is my intuition," he once declared to *Voetbal International*. "I can't just ignore that, can I? If I did, I'd be just one of a thousand players of my age. Often I would agree with my coach, then do my own thing on the pitch."

In his final two seasons, no other Ajax player was as influential as De Jong. Whether used as a wing-half, a freewheeling playmaker or even as a centre-back – where he was successfully deployed for most of the 2017-18 season – he was the one who invariably made the Amsterdammers tick, stylishly bringing the ball out from the back, artfully dribbling through opposition lines and finding the most unexpected of passing angles. Boasting rare positional intelligence and vision, he never seems to be under pressure, so comfortable on the ball and adept at finding space.

He was the cornerstone of an Ajax side which came so close to completing a clean sweep last term: winning both the Eredivisie and Dutch Cup, and swotting aside Real Madrid and Juventus en route to reaching the semi-finals of the Champions League.

"He's developed tremendously," gushed

Reserves...playing for Jong Ajax

SEP 6, 2018
Makes his senior international debut in a 2-1 friendly win against Peru.

JAN 23, 2019
Barcelona announce his signing on a five-year contract, effective from July 1.

MAY 5, 2019
Wins the KNVB Cup as Ajax beat Willem II 4-0 in the Final.

MAY 8, 2019
In the Ajax side that loses 3-2 to Tottenham Hotspur and goes out of the Champions League semi-finals on away goals.

MAY 15, 2019
Helps Ajax complete the double, beating De Graafschap 4-1 to secure the league title.

Family..with his grandfather and father

Ajax coach Erik Ten Hag on a Fox Sports chat show back in May. "He's kicked in the door. The level he has performed at this season is gigantic."

As predictable as night following day, he has also graduated to main-man status for the national team. He won his first cap as substitute in a friendly with Peru in September 2018 and this autumn opened his *Oranje* goalscoring account in Holland's 4-2 victory over Germany in a Euro 2020 qualifier.

While his international career is still in its infancy, he is already one of the team's choirmasters, a pillar of the rejuvenated Netherlands side.

"Frenkie is someone who creates openings," said Holland coach Ronald Koeman at a press conference in March. "It's often said that he runs with the ball too often, but that's what makes the holes [in a defence]. He simply is an important player for us.

"I don't think I used to speak with such wisdom when I was his age. Everything he does is with a smile on his face. He's uninhibited. This is how you see him every day."

Named after the 1980s English pop group Frankie Goes to Hollywood – albeit with a different spelling – and De Jong certainly lives up to the title of one of the Liverpool band's biggest hits. He does not have to be taught to *Relax*.

Frenkie, raised in the village of Arkel, a hamlet in the province of South Holland, has had an affinity with football almost from the moment he exited the womb. His father, John, had been good enough to have a short spell in the academy of leading Rotterdam outfit Feyenoord and would subsequently play for ASV Arkel for over two decades. He was a huge fan of Dutch legend Johan Cruyff and, as a tribute, sported the number 14 shirt. How appropriate that his son is following in Cruyff's footsteps at Ajax and now Barcelona.

A football obsessive, De Jong joined ASV when he was just five-years old and made an impression straight away.

"I'll never forget my introduction to Frenkie," recalled his first ASV coach Tom De Jonge in the *Algemeen Dagblad*. "His socks came over his thighs. His shorts were way too big. He'd be playing with boys two years older. But he was by far the best."

Word of his talent soon spread, with Arkel becoming scout central, and only 24 months after arriving at ASV he faced the toughest of decisions: which professional club academy to plump for, Feyenoord or the joint Willem-RKC programme.

To all intents and purposes,

> "He simply is an important player for us. I don't think I used to speak with such wisdom when I was his age"
>
> **Ronald Koeman**

Boss...Holland coach Ronald Koeman

JUN 9

In the Holland side that loses 1-0 to Portugal in the UEFA Nations League Final.

AUG 16, 2019

Makes his competitive debut for Barcelona in a 1–0 loss to Athletic Bilbao.

SEP 6, 2019

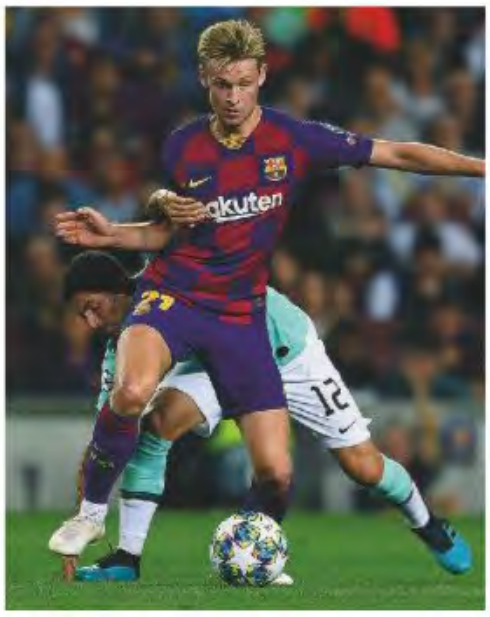
Gets his first international goal as Holland win 4-2 away to Germany in a Euro 2020 qualifier.

SEP 14, 2019,

Scores his first goal for Barcelona, in a 5-2 victory over Valencia.

Frenkie De Jong the numbers game

Barca boy...in the Champions League



Feyenoord seemed the better option: a bigger, more established organisation which was closer to home. And just to make the decision easier, the De Jong family were fans of the Rotterdammers. Frenkie, however, was allowed to make his own mind up. He preferred Willem.

Throughout his life, total dedication to football has been the name of the game. For him, every sacrifice was worth it to make his soccer dream come true.

"Frenkie is about peace, propriety and regularity," his mother, Marjon, told *NRC*. "Early to bed, no parties, healthy eating and no alcohol."

Thom Van der Laan, a friend from his schooldays, painted the same type of picture, saying: "As a teenager he wasn't interested in clothes or expensive cars. It was football, football, football. I never knew him without a ball."

During a family holiday to the Costa Brava six years ago, Frenkie and his father visited Camp Nou, Barcelona's iconic stadium.

The reaction of junior? "Dad, I want to play there one day."

Wish granted. WS

HOLLAND

12
CAPS

1
GOALS

UEFA MIDFIELDER OF THE SEASON

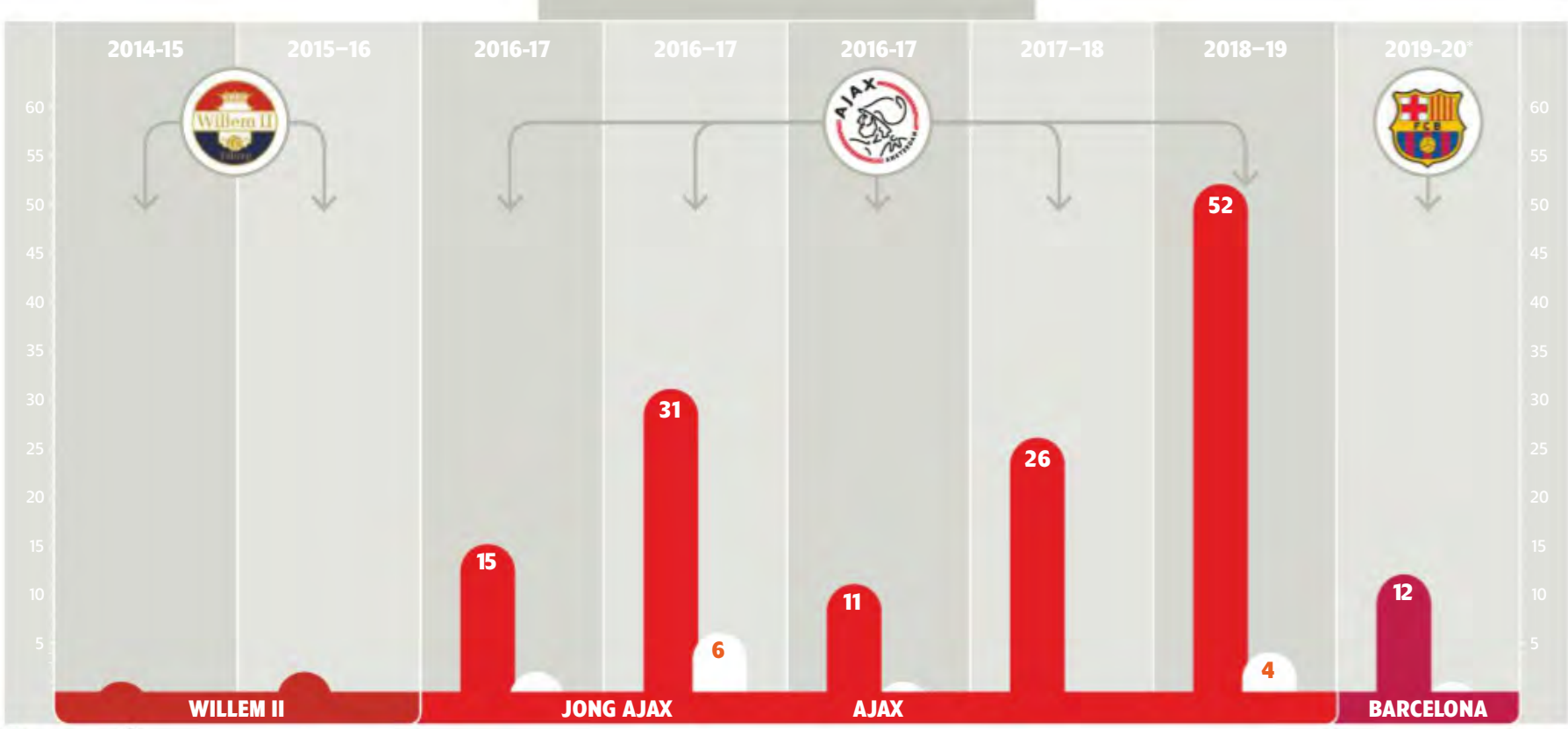
- 2016–17 **Luka Modric** (Real Madrid)
- 2017–18 **Luka Modric** (Real Madrid)
- 2018–19 **Frenkie De Jong** (Ajax)

DUTCH FOOTBALL TALENT OF THE YEAR (U21)

- 2014–15 **MEMPHIS DEPAY** (PSV)
- 2015–16 **VINCENT JANSSEN** (AZ)
- 2016–17 **KASPER DOLBERG** (Ajax)
- 2017–18 **MATTHIJS DE LIGT** (Ajax)
- 2018–19 **FRENKIE DE JONG** (Ajax)

HONOURS

- **EREDIVISIE** 2019
- **KNVB CUP** 2019
- **EUROPA LEAGUE** runner-up 2017
- **UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE** runner-up 2019



GAMES GOALS *(up to & inc 23.10.19)*

Glenn Moore

New W-League offers hope

Aussie 2023 World Cup bid receives boost

A blue plaque was unveiled in a south Sydney suburb in October, not far from Botany Bay where Captain Cook made landfall in 1770 and launched the first European settlement of Australia. The plaque, however, was to mark a less remembered historical landmark: the birth of the Matildas, Australia's women's football team.

It was at Seymour Park, in October 1979, that Australia played their first international, a 2-2 draw with New Zealand. A smattering of spectators watched the game and media coverage was negligible.

Four decades on and the Matildas are now a household brand, the team's star player Sam Kerr is a national icon and Australia wants to host the 2023 Women's World Cup.

It has been a long haul, with most of it conducted in the shadows. For many years the game was widely derided as an immigrant sport by a public more interested in cricket, rugby league and Australian Rules football. The men's team reached the World Cup in 1974 and have been regulars in recent editions, but despite high participation levels, especially among children, the A-League has struggled for coverage in the traditional media.

In what used to be a very male-orientated society the women's team was even less visible, but female sport is now booming in Australia, with the Matildas carving out their own niche in this crowded sporting landscape. Their World Cup appearance this summer was closely followed and Kerr's message to the critics after they beat Brazil – "suck on that one" – went viral.

Now significant change is underway, with Football Federation Australia in the process of handing over control of the A-League and W-League to a new body controlled by the clubs. There is also a joint TV deal with the main terrestrial channel, ABC, and ambitious plans to grow the women's game. These include expanding the W-League in terms of clubs, reach and fixtures, and enhancing pay and conditions for the players, many of whom either also have "normal" jobs or have to fit the Australian season into a peripatetic global career.

Quite how this will be paid for is not clear, but the Matildas popularity is helping attract sponsors and broadcasters while the potential to improve female public health has encouraged investment from state and federal government.

An interesting development is the appointment of Richard Scudamore, a key figure in the growth of England's Premier League, as an adviser to the new leagues body.

> Female sport is now booming in Australia, with the Matildas carving out their own niche

Hosting the World Cup would hugely accelerate the game's development by attracting funding, inspiring youngsters and penetrating deep into the national consciousness. Australia has existing facilities and infrastructure, a sporting heritage and hosting expertise after a successful men's Asian Cup in 2015. However, the time difference would be unpopular with European and American TV companies and there is competition within the Asian confederation with rival bids from Japan and South Korea. If Australia are chosen as the Asian bid they stand a strong chance as the "safe" option – but that is a big "if".

Matildas...players from the 1979 team (front) pose with the current squad

Teen star...Mary Fowler (right)

For the Matildas the next challenge is the Olympics. The final stage of Asian qualifying is in February and March, with two going through to Tokyo from the eight nations left. Ante Milicic, who took over for the World Cup after the sacking of Alen Stajcic (a decision so controversial an independent inquiry is underway with its report imminent), will be in charge before moving to new A-League club Macarthur FC for their 2020-21 debut season.

Milicic can call on a developing young team who under-achieved in France but are growing in experience. Kerr is one of a dozen players featuring in America's NWSL, with half of those involved in the four-club play-offs, while there is a smattering of players in Europe. Sixteen-year-old Mary Fowler, newly recruited by Adelaide United, is one of nine teenagers to be called up this year by Milicic.

The W-League's start was delayed to 14 November due to the late finish of the NWSL following the World Cup, and the November international break. Further complications relating to the new TV deal and administrative handover meant fixtures were not released until a few weeks before the season's start.

The league, which began in 2008, has nine clubs covering seven cities (two apiece in Melbourne and Sydney). Eight are affiliated with men's A-League clubs,

No return...Sam Kerr (right) looks set to leave Perth Glory

the exception being Canberra United.

Long-term the hope is every A-League club will have a women's team, potentially including Wellington Phoenix, which would provide a professional outlet for New Zealand players. First, however, the aim is to expand the fixture list into a true home-and-away schedule. At present there are only 14 matches which means an imbalance. However, Australia's large distances and the need for many players to work – the average player contract is A$17,400 – makes midweek fixtures problematic while a longer season could clash with NWSL.

Kerr seems more likely to head for Europe than return to Perth Glory, which will rob the league of its biggest star.

Her absence would probably rule the West Australian club out of contention, leaving the title likely to be between defending champions Sydney, the team they deposed Melbourne City (an offshoot of England's Manchester City) and regular-season winners Melbourne Victory. WS

Round-up

Historic...Tahadi (in green) take on Difaain

▲ SUDAN LAUNCH LEAGUE

The first women's league in Sudan has begun, just six months after the ending of 36 years of Sharia law during which the sport was sidelined.

Tahadi and Difaain launched the 21-team league in Khartoum watched by minister of sport Wala Essam, who said: "This is a historical game not only for women's sport but for Sudan. We will give special attention to women's sport and women's football"

Spectators chanted "Civilian rule" and "Kandaka", a reference to the ancient Nubian queens.

Islamist dictator Omar Al Bashir was toppled in an April coup after 30 years in power and a joint military-civilian body is now governing the nation.

Champions... Heather O'Reilly (right) and McCall Zerboni of North Carolina Courage

▲ COURAGE TAKE THREE IN A ROW

North Carolina Courage clinched the NWSL shield for the third successive year finishing the 24-game regular season five points clear of Chicago Red Stars. Portland Thorns and Reign FC also made the championship play-offs.

Thorns' average attendance topped 20,000 for the season, comfortably the highest in the women's game globally, while Chicago's Sam Kerr was top scorer with 18 goals.

▲ CATCH-22 FOR LUGANO

Swiss club Lugano faced a Catch-22 problem when immigration officials ruled that many of their American players, who combine playing with studying, require work permits in order to play. However, as the Swiss federation regard the sport as amateur, no work permits can be issued. Forced to field many academy players, Lugano lost their opening league match 8-0. Most Americans went home but some remained to play in the reserves and the second string won 9-0.

Leaving...Jill Ellis

▲ ELLIS BOWS OUT

After two World Cup triumphs, Jill Ellis concluded her reign as USA coach with a 1-1 draw against South Korea. She said: "It's a sense of feeling like it's a story written and it's a chapter closed and it's on to other things. But it's been an unbelievable journey."

▼ DISRUPTION IN ECUADOR

The Copa Libertadores Femenina was disrupted by civil unrest in Ecuador, where the tournament was staged.

The Final was due to take place on October 28 but street protests against austerity measures forced rescheduling of the group games.

America de Cali went into the tournament fresh from winning the Colombian league by beating Independiente Medellin 3-2 on aggregate in the Final.

Protests...street demonstrations in Ecuador

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World Service

INCORPORATING Global diary

Exclusive reports from our worldwide network of correspondents

70

TIM VICKERY
South America

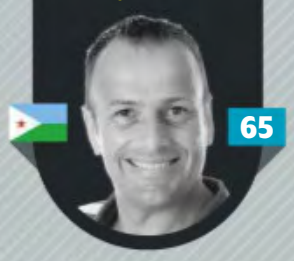
72

GAVIN HAMILTON
Euro 2020

68

JOHN DUERDEN
Iran

STEVE MENARY
Djibouti



65

MARK GLEESON
Africa

66

PLUS

68

Girls allowed...female fans watch Iran's national team

DIARY

64 Comprehensive global news

RESULTS, TABLES, FIXTURES

74 Internationals
78 Club matches
79 ESM XI

SQUADS

80 France: Ligue 1

72

Going through...Ukraine (in yellow) beat Portugal

SEPTEMBER 26-OCTOBER 22, 2020

Global diary

A comprehensive record of recent events around the world

Thursday September 26

COPA SUDAMERICANA: Colon of Argentina will meet Ecuador's Independiente del Valle in the Final, on November 9, after beating Brazil's Atletico Mineiro on penalties.
ENGLAND: Derby County's Tom Lawrence and Mason Bennett are charged with drink-driving following a crash on Tuesday night that ruled the Championship club's captain Richard Keogh out for the rest of the season with a knee injury. A proposal for Bury to be admitted to League Two next season is rejected.
ITALY: Milan and Internazionale shortlist two designs for a new 60,000-seat stadium which will be built next to their San Siro home over the next three years at an expected cost of €650m.
SPAIN: Barcelona are found guilty of making an illegal approach to Antoine Griezmann ahead of his €120m move from Atletico Madrid, but are fined just €300 by the Royal Spanish Football Federation.

Friday September 27

PORTUGAL: Silas becomes Sporting's third coach in just over three weeks, and the fifth in less than 11 months, replacing Leonel Pontes, who had been interim boss following Marcel Keizer's dismissal.
TAJIKSTAN: Istiklol beat Kuktosh 6-1 to win their sixth consecutive league title and a record-breaking eighth championship in total.

Saturday September 28

ITALY: On loan from Manchester United, Alexis Sanchez scores on his first start as Internazionale win 3-1 at Sampdoria before he is sent off early in the second half.
LAOS: League champions Lao Toyota win the Commando LFF Cup, beating Evo United 8-0 in the Final.
PHILIPPINES: Ceres-Negros' national record of 16 consecutive league victories ends with a 1-1 draw at Stallion Laguna.
SPAIN: Atletico and Real draw 0-0 in the Madrid derby at the Wanda Metropolitano.
THAILAND: PT Prachuap claim their first major silverware, beating Buriram United on penalties in the League Cup Final.
TIMOR LESTE: Playing in the top tier for the first time, Lalenok United are crowned champions of the Liga Futebol Amadora with a 3-2 victory over Academica Dili.

Sunday September 29

GERMANY: Substitute Vedad Ibisevic scores two goals with his first two touches as Hertha Berlin beat Cologne 4-0.
ITALY: Mario Balotelli scores his first goal for Brescia as they lose 2-1 away at Napoli.

Monday September 30

CLUB WORLD CUP: The Education City Stadium in Qatar will host one semi-final, the third-place play-off and the Final, on December 21, with Khalifa International Stadium and Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium also hosting games.

Tuesday October 1

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal win 4-1 in Qatar against Al Sadd in the away leg of their semi-final.
CONCACAF: Former CONCACAF general secretary Enrique Sanz is banned from all football-related activity for life after being found guilty of bribery.
COPA LIBERTADORES: Goals from Rafael Santos Borre and Ignacio Fernandez give River Plate a 2-0 lead after the home leg of their semi-final against Boca Juniors.
ERITREA: Five players, who are believed to have sought asylum, disappear the day before Eritrea's CECAFA Under-20 Challenge Cup semi-final against Kenya in Uganda.
UEFA CHAMP LEAGUE: Tottenham Hotspur suffer their heaviest home defeat in their 137-year history, losing 7-2 to Bayern Munich. Real Madrid come from 2-0 down to draw 2-2 at home to Club Brugge as coach Zinedine Zidane complains: "We have never played as bad as we did in the opening 45 minutes."

Wednesday October 2

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Goals from Fabricio and Takahiro Sekine earn Urawa Red Diamonds a 2-0 lead over Guangzhou Evergrande after their home semi-final.
AFC CUP: North Korean side 4.25

Super sub... Vehad Ibisevic of Hertha Berlin

Poor...Real Madrid (in white) struggle against Club Brugge

beat Vietnam's Hanoi on away goals to reach the Final on November 2, when they will meet Lebanon's Al Ahed, who beat Al Jazeera of Jordan 1-0 on aggregate.

COPA LIBERTADORES: Flamengo are denied three goals by VAR as they draw 1-1 at Gremio in the first leg of their semi-final.

SPAIN: Former Valencia president Juan Bautista Soler is jailed for two years after an attempt to kidnap his successor, Vicente Soriano, over money owed.

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: After conceding three goals in 35 minutes, Red Bull Salzburg draw level before hosts Liverpool come back to win 4-3. Internazionale score at Camp Nou for the first time in almost 50 years but still lose 2-1 to Barcelona.

Thursday October 3

EUROPA LEAGUE: Wu Lei becomes the first Chinese national to score in the group stage of a ➤

Level...Flamengo (in red) and Gremio

Djibouti

STEVE MENARY

Line-up...the side that played Eswatini

Back on the world stage

Dissolved national team making headway in Qatar qualifiers

Restarting a national team that had been abolished is no easy task, so winning through to the group stage of the 2022 World Cup qualifiers is some achievement for Julien Mette.

One of the world's most inactive and hapless national sides, Djibouti lost all six qualifiers for the 2017 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON). Despite beating newcomers South Sudan 2-0 in the next set of AFCON games, Djibouti lost 6-0 in the return. And a 5-1 hammering at home to neighbours Ethiopia in an African Nations Championship (CHAN) preliminary proved too much for national federation president Souleiman Hassan Waberi, who dissolved the side.

Djibouti did not play any more senior internationals until this year, when Mette was contacted about taking on the daunting task of reviving the national side.

"I went for a visit in Djibouti," says the 37-year-old French coach, whose contract at Congolese club AS Otoho had elapsed. "Those five days made my final decision because I could watch games, see the facilities and the motivation of the people in the federation, especially the president Waberi.

"I had to start from the bottom. From January to April I saw all the games of the first division championship and some second division games. I picked the players I found the most compatible for my philosophy, those who have the qualities that I search for: agility, good vision, calm, intelligence, very good technically, generous."

Only three players from the last game retained their place in Mette's first squad for a friendly with neighbouring Somalia in July. A 1-0 win augured well and, even though Djibouti lost a subsequent CHAN qualifier to Ethiopia 5-3 on aggregate, Mette had instilled a sense of momentum.

Against Eswatini in the home leg of a World Cup qualifier, Djibouti won 2-1 thanks to two penalties before battling out a goalless draw in Manzini in the return to progress.

The win was revenge for Djibouti's 8-1 thrashing by Eswatini – then called Swaziland – in the preliminaries for the 2018 World Cup qualifiers back in 2015.

In this year's rematch, half of Mette's squad were aged under 23, and four players aged between 18 and 21 started, with nearly all of the side playing in the Djibouti league, which is part-time at best.

> "Football is a corridor for success in some countries like mine. We live in it, we breathe in it, but it's not the same [in Djibouti]" Cameroonian striker Joseph Mboyong

AS Port won the title for a fourth time last season but, like many Djibouti sides before, they did not take part in qualification for the CAF Champions League.

Mette is looking overseas to expand his squad and has brought in several players, but identifying the Djibouti diaspora is not easy. Thousands of people fled a civil war between 1991 and 1994 and many switched nationalities.

There is still a lot of convincing to be done. As Cameroonian striker Joseph Mboyong – who played for CDE/Colas, Tadjourah and Arhiba in Djibouti – says: "Football is a corridor for success in some countries like mine. We live in it, we breathe in it, but it's not the same [in Djibouti]. It's just a distraction. But the federation boss is fighting to make it be part of them. It can be possible but will take time."

The draw for the next stage of the World Cup qualifiers will be made in January and Mette's hope is that by then he will have a more experienced squad at his disposal. WS

CAF Champions League

MARK GLEESON

Big guns target more success

Previous winners eye further continental triumphs

If Egypt's Zamalek win their postponed first-round tie and advance, as expected, it will mean that 11 of the 16 protagonists in the group phase of this season's African Champions League have won the trophy before.

That represents a formidable field going in search of the continent's top club prize and the potential of a titanic tussle for the trophy, with the Final in May.

The group phase kicks off at the end of November and the headline story will be the bid by Tunisia's Esperance, for so long a perennial bridesmaid, to lift the trophy for an unprecedented third year in a row.

Last season's success came after a boardroom battle, and a slap down for CAF, after Esperance's opponents, Wydad of Casablanca, walked off the pitch in a protest over a refereeing decision in the second leg of the Final.

Esperance were eventually declared champions, but only after CAF had bizarrely ordered the game to be replayed and the Tunisians took the matter to CAS.

Wydad, astonishingly, were only fined for their petulance and are participating in the Champions League again, when by rights they should be banned.

The Moroccan club were winners in 2017 and, although they have frequently changed coaches since, they have kept the core of their team and will again be considered among the favourites.

Last season's two finalists were top seeds when the draw was made in October, along with Al Ahly of Egypt and TP Mazembe of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The group phase goes through until early March with the top two in each group progressing to the quarter-finals.

Esperance were drawn in the toughest group, with Raja of Morocco, Algeria's JS Kabylie and AS Vita Club of DR Congo – all past winners – and an early glimpse of their credentials this time will come away at Raja on November 29.

Wydad drew old nemesis Mamelodi Sundowns of South Africa for the fourth successive year and the pair are likely to be too strong for USM Alger and Angola's Petro Atletico in Group C.

Al Ahly's bid to win a record-extending ninth title begins in Group B, where Etoile Sahel of Tunisia, Sudan's Al Hilal and rookies FC Platinum of Zimbabwe should not pose too severe a threat.

> **Wydad are participating in the Champions League again, when by rights they should be banned**

The Cairo giants have appointed Rene Weiler, the Swiss coach formerly with Nuremberg and Anderlecht, to take charge this season.

Mazembe should also progress with relative ease past Primeiro Agosto of Angola and Zambia's ZESCO United in Group A. The other team is still to be decided as Zamalek and Senegal's Generation Foot had yet to complete their tie before the draw was conducted. WS

One-sided...Thapelo Morena was one of 10 players to score for Mamelodi Sundowns as they beat Cote d'Or of the Seychelles 11-1 in the home leg of their first-round tie

➤ European club competition, with a goal in Espanyol's 2-0 victory at CSKA Moscow.

Friday October 4

NORTHERN IRELAND: Glentoran's Darren Murray is sent off against Cliftonville after ignoring the ref's instruction to leave the pitch at the nearest point on being substituted. The striker, whose side lost 1-0, was shown a second yellow card by Steven Gregg after refusing to exit on the far side of the ground.
SPAIN: Real Madrid deny keeper Thibaut Courtois suffered an anxiety attack at half-time during Tuesday's 2-2 Champions League draw with Club Brugge. Courtois, who was criticised after conceding two goals, was replaced by Alphonse Areola, but Real issue a statement stating: "Our player has never been diagnosed with an alleged anxiety... Courtois has been diagnosed and treated for acute gastroenteritis."

Saturday October 5

CHILE: Esteban Paredes becomes the all-time top marksman in the country's Primera Division, scoring his 216th goal as Colo Colo beat Universidad de Chile 3-2.
GERMANY: Four days after their 7-2 win at Tottenham Hotspur in the Champions League, Bayern Munich suffer their first Bundesliga defeat of the season, losing 2-1 at home to Hoffenheim.

Sunday October 6

ENGLAND: Playing alongside his brother Sean and making his Premier League debut, 19-year-old Matty Longstaff scores the only goal of the game as Newcastle United beat Manchester United.
ITALY: Juventus bring a halt to Internazionale's perfect start in Serie A, winning 2-1 at the San Siro to overtake their hosts at the top of the table.
SCOTLAND: Celtic lose 2-1 away at Livingston and surrender top spot to Rangers, who beat Hamilton 5-0.
SPAIN: Ronald Araujo is sent off on his Barcelona debut, along with team-mate Ousmane Dembele, in a 4-0 win at home to Sevilla.
USA: With all three goals in Los Angeles' 3-1 victory over Colorado Rapids, Carlos Vela sets a new MLS record with 34 goals in a campaign.

Monday October 7

AUSTRALIA: The Australian PFA men's player of the year in 2015, goalkeeper Mat Ryan becomes only

Final...Esperance's Ghailene Chaalali holds off Walid El Karti of Wydad

the second multiple winner of the award, ending the three-year reign of on-loan Brighton & Hove Albion team-mate Aaron Mooy.

ITALY: Gianluca Vialli's proposed purchase of former club Sampdoria is off after his consortium could not agree a deal with current president Massimo Ferrero, who wanted €100m for the *Blucerchiati*. Bottom of Serie A, the club part company with coach Eusebio Di Francesco by mutual consent later in the day.

Tuesday October 8

SPAIN: Lionel Messi tells Catalan radio station RAC1 he wanted to leave Barcelona in 2013 when under investigation from the Spanish tax authorities. The 32-year-old, who began playing aged six for Newell's Old Boys in his homeland, adds: "I always dreamed of being able to play again for Newell's and to have the experience of playing football in Argentina. But I have already told them that sometimes you have to think about what is best for your family."

USA: Chicago Fire will leave SeatGeek Stadium and return to Soldier Field next season. Owner Joe Mansueto, who purchased full control of the team in September, says they need to be located "centrally where all of Chicago can enjoy it".

Wednesday October 9

ENGLAND: Former Chelsea and Arsenal goalkeeper Petr Cech, who retired in the summer, joins National Ice Hockey League side Guildford Phoenix as a goaltender.

GERMANY: Joachim Low gives debuts to Robin Koch, Luca Waldschmidt (both Freiburg), Nadiem Amiri (Bayer Leverkusen) and Suat Serdar (Schalke) as a youthful Germany surrender a two-goal lead in Dortmund to draw 2-2 in a friendly with Argentina. Sevilla's Lucas Ocampos scores on his first appearance for the visitors.

SERBIA: Red Star's team bus is turned back at the border as the team from Belgrade are prevented from crossing into Kosovo for a cup game against local Serb side Trepca in northern Kosovo.

Thursday October 10

BRAZIL: Neymar becomes the seventh – and, at 27, the youngest – player to reach a century of caps for Brazil as they draw 1-1 with Senegal in Singapore.

EURO 2020: With a 9-0 win at ➤

➤ home to San Marino, Belgium equal their biggest ever winning margin and are the first team to qualify for the finals. With the first of his two goals, Romelu Lukaku becomes the first player to score 50 times for Belgium.
KYRGYZSTAN: Edgar Bernhardt scores a hat-trick in a World Cup qualifier as Kyrgyzstan beat Myanmar 7-0 for their biggest ever victory in international competition.

Friday October 11

AUSTRALIA: Sydney begin the defence of their A-League title with a 3-2 win away to Adelaide United.
EURO 2020: Czech Republic end England's 43-match unbeaten run in World Cup and Euro qualifiers with a 2-1 win in Prague as 30-year-old Zdenek Ondrasek comes on as a sub for his debut and scores the winner. After 56 successive qualifying losses in the competition, Andorra beat Moldova 1-0.

Saturday October 12

EURO 2020: Italy beat Greece 2-0 and qualify for the finals with three games to spare.
SPAIN: Sergio Ramos makes his 168th appearance and becomes Spain's most-capped player as they draw 1-1 with Norway.

Sunday October 13

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS: Gambia, Chad, South Sudan and Sao Tome advance to the group stage of qualifying.
EURO 2020: Russia and Poland reach the finals, beating Cyprus and North Macedonia respectively.
SCOTLAND: With the first hat-trick of his career, John McGinn becomes the first player to score a first-half treble for Scotland since 1952 as they beat San Marino 6-0 in a game that also sees Stuart Findlay score on his international debut.

Monday October 14

EURO 2020: England's game against Bulgaria in Sofia is halted twice after their players are racially abused. In line with UEFA protocol, England have the option to walk off the pitch but continue to play the full 90 minutes and win 6-0. Ukraine beat Portugal 2-1 to confirm their place in the finals.
SPAIN: The Catalan Football Federation suspends all games in the region after nine separatist leaders are jailed. This does not include matches in La Liga.
VENEZUELA: Tomas Rincon is only the third player – after Jose Manuel Rey (111) and Juan Arango (128) ➤

Iran

JOHN DUERDEN

Female supporters make history in Tehran

But was invite to watch World Cup qualifier just a gesture?

Despite losing 14-0 away to Iran in a qualifier for the 2022 World Cup, Cambodia coach Keisuke Honda took smiling selfies with female home fans at Tehran's Azadi Stadium after the game. "This is something great and the fans are great," said the former Japan star. "And it is an honour to witness it."

The reason for Honda's happiness was that he had been part of a game that had been watched by more than 3,000 women.

With a handful of minor exceptions, women have been banned from watching football in Iran since 1981, but here they were, watching their national team thrash the Cambodians. Every single goal was celebrated wildly, the songs never stopped and the fans who had waited so long to see Team Melli were rewarded at the end as the players approached their specially constructed section to applaud. Not surprisingly, the feeling was this is something that should happen more often.

Less than a week earlier, the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) had suddenly put women-only tickets on open sale and they were snapped up within minutes. The tickets provided entry – helped along by female stewards – to a specially built section of the stadium, separated from the rest. Not many more men were present, leaving the arena which can hold close to 100,000 at around 10 per cent full.

"We are so happy that, finally, we got the chance to go to the stadium. It's an extraordinary feeling,"

Zahra Pashaei, a 29-year-old nurse, told Associated Press. "At least for me, 22 or 23 years of longing and regret lies behind this."

In the previous decade, any visitor to the Azadi would have seen women protesting outside at not being allowed in. And as authorities became increasingly annoyed by this, so the women moved to social media to spread their message and keep international media informed. The news early in 2018 that regional rival Saudi Arabia was finally allowing women into their stadiums left Tehran even more isolated. And something had to give after the death of Sahar Khodayari.

The 29-year-old female fan of Esteghlal had been arrested for trying to enter a stadium, disguised as a man, to watch her club in March and, after reportedly hearing she could spend six months in prison, she set herself on fire on September 2 and died of her injuries six days later.

There was outcry both inside and outside a country which loves its football. Members of the national team expressed their sorrow and anger at the tragedy, while bitter Tehran rivals Persepolis and Esteghlal were united in their grief. Fans around the country sang in honour of Sahar, who became known as "Blue Girl" due to the colours of Esteghlal.

Support...female fans watch Iran beat Cambodia

Despite such gender discrimination breaking its basic principles FIFA did little except call upon Iran to change. The world governing body has suspended federations for less and even did so with the FFIRI in 2006 for political interference in the running of the game. Campaigners wanted FIFA to ban Iran again, as being thrown out of the World Cup – which doubles up as the qualifying campaign for the 2023 Asian Cup – would have been a huge blow for a country already isolated internationally.

In the past, the FFIRI has made the occasional gesture, enough to keep FIFA and hardliners in the country from getting too upset. Women were allowed in the Azadi in June 2018 to watch Iran's World Cup games on big screens. Around 100 hand-picked fans watched a friendly against Bolivia and then, in November, around 1,000 supporters of Persepolis watched the AFC Champions League Final.

Such moves garnered plenty of international media attention but many inside the country felt that this made their job harder as it reduced pressure to bring about meaningful change. But the death of Blue Girl touched a nerve all around the world. FIFA's talk became stronger and president Gianni Infantino demanded women be allowed in against Cambodia.

On the face of it, this was a big step - but not all are convinced. Much depends on what happens next.

A repeat of the Cambodia game is not sustainable as people will not accept just 10,000 tickets or so being sold. Men will be allowed back to the Azadi in numbers when World Cup qualification resumes at home next year. The question is, will women? And if so, how many and will they be allowed to buy tickets on the open market? If they are not then the pressure will return. It is not just about the national team either. As things stand, women still can't go and watch league games in the country.

All that has happened so far is that a small number of women were allowed to watch Iran play Cambodia after severe pressure. It is only a step in the right direction if the journey continues. Otherwise, despite the feel-good factor against Cambodia that even had Keisuke Honda smiling, it is just a gesture. WS

Thanks... Iran's players acknowledge their female support

South America

TIM VICKERY

Contrasting fortunes for big guns

Questions for Brazil coach Tite as Argentina revive under Scaloni

Back in July, Brazil beat Argentina 2-0 in the Copa America semi-finals and, while there was some controversy about refereeing decisions, there was no doubt that Brazil were the better side. Five days later they deservedly won the Copa, while Argentina got ready to lose the services of Lionel Messi to suspension after he accused the competition of being riddled with corruption.

Yet, little more than three months later, it is Brazil coach Tite who is under pressure while Argentina's Lionel Scaloni is sitting pretty.

In four subsequent games Brazil have managed no wins and kept no clean sheets, while doubts exist about the architecture of the side. After years of setting up in a 4-1-4-1 (or 4-3-3 according to preference), Tite has tried to do something different by bringing Neymar into a more central role. The experiment was hampered by an injury he picked up early on in a recent friendly against Nigeria, forcing a swift substitution, but the questions remain. Do Brazil possess the attacking mobility to get the best out of Roberto Firmino at centre-forward? And does fielding Firmino and Neymar plus two wide attackers leave them too open to the counter-attack?

When Tite took over a little over three years ago, the parts dropped instantly into place. Now he is going to have to work harder to find the right blend.

Argentina, meanwhile, are moving with surprising serenity, despite the absence of Messi.

Upgraded from caretaker to permanent coach, Scaloni has introduced a new generation of midfield and attacking talent. Centre-forward Lautaro Martinez scored a stunning hat-trick to turn a potentially tough game against Mexico into a 4-0 rout, while midfielders Exequiel Palacios, Nico Dominguez and Alexis Mac Allister all made their presence felt. In addition, striker Lucas Alario and wide attacker Lucas Ocampos have also been successfully brought into the squad.

Even allowing for the fact that Ecuador are in transition and have a caretaker coach, Argentina's 6-1 win over their South American rivals was an impressive

Newcomer...Lucas Ocampos of Argentina

Injured...Tite watches Neymar leave the pitch against Nigeria

scoreline – as was the 2-2 draw away to Germany.

Some problems do remain, however. There is a worrying dearth of top-class defenders, and backed by the Dortmund crowd the Germans took quick advantage to go two goals ahead. Scaloni, though, read the game well and made an adjustment at the interval, switching from a back four to a line of three, stopping the Germans higher up the field and giving his side the platform to snatch a draw.

Results, of course, are never the be all and end all of friendly matches, and events over the past two months will be quickly forgotten as soon as the next World Cup qualifying campaign gets underway in March. But there is a chance coming up to measure the respective progress of Brazil and Argentina as they meet in Saudi Arabia on November 15.

For the continent's other sides, the November FIFA dates are the only chance to warm up at full strength – hence the fact there is a sense of urgency as Ecuador look to announce a big-name coach.

Ecuador's quest to reach Russia 2018 started brightly, but became derailed along the way. The first reaction was to re-appoint Hernan Dario Gomez, the veteran Colombian coach who took Ecuador to their first World Cup in 2002, but it was a controversial choice as he had been in charge of Panama when they lost 6-1 to England and many felt that was a less than adequate audition. Gomez then got himself into trouble by downplaying the importance of the recent Copa, and when his team performed badly – thrashed by Uruguay, beaten by Chile, held by an experimental Japan – he was dismissed.

The latest name in the frame to replace him is Germany's Jurgen Klinsmann, with whom the Ecuadorian Football Federation has reportedly been negotiating for some time.

This is a bold move as Klinsmann will not come cheap, with the local media speculating he will cost three times as much as Gomez. And there is also an easy line for criticism, with the suspicion that he might spend most of his time in California.

However, Ecuador are the reigning South American under-20 champions, with a side that claimed third place in the recent World Cup at that level, so there would be some interesting raw material for Klinsmann to work with.

If agreement is reached with the Ecuadorian FA, it will be intriguing to see what he does with it. WS

➤ – to reach a century of caps for Venezuela as they beat Trinidad & Tobago 2-0 in a friendly.

Tuesday October 15

CANADA: A 2-0 win in their opening CONCACAF Nations League game is Canada's first victory over the USA since a friendly in 1985 and ends a 17-match losing run against their North American rivals.

EURO 2020: Substitute Rodrigo turns in Fabian Ruiz's 92nd-minute cross to earn Spain a 1-1 draw in Sweden and pick up the point they require to qualify.

GERMANY: Turkish midfielder Cenk Sahin is released by 2.Bundesliga side St Pauli after he posts a message on social media in support of his country's military action in northern Syria.

NORTH KOREA: Hosting South Korea on home soil for the first time in nearly three decades, North Korea draw 0-0 with their neighbours in a World Cup qualifier. The game is played in an empty Kim Il Sung Stadium in Pyongyang with a complete media blackout.

Wednesday October 16

EGYPT: The Egyptian Football Association postpones Saturday's Cairo derby between Al Ahly and Zamalek for security reasons.

Thursday October 17

SPAIN: La Liga asks the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) for permission to stage December's fixture between Atletico Madrid and Villarreal in Miami. Both clubs have agreed to the proposal to play the game at Miami Dolphins' Hard Rock Stadium.

Friday October 18

BULGARIA: National coach Krassimir Balakov resigns four days after Bulgaria's Euro 2020 loss to England was overshadowed by racism from home supporters. After the match finished Balakov claimed he "didn't hear anything" but later said: "If this is proven to be true, then we have to be ashamed and we have to apologise for it."

ITALY: US Citta di Palermo, the side that finished fifth in Serie A three times during the 2000s and reached the Coppa Italia Final in 2011, officially ceases to exist after 32 years as the bankruptcy court of Palermo accepts a request from prosecutors to declare the club insolvent. A phoenix team, SSD Palermo, now play in Serie D.

SPAIN: *El Clasico* between ➤

➤ Barcelona and Real Madrid at Camp Nou on October 26 is postponed due to civil unrest in Catalonia. La Liga had initially requested the game be switched to Real's Estadio Santiago Bernabeu.

Saturday October 19

ENGLAND: The FA Cup fourth qualifying round tie between Haringey Borough and Yeovil Town is abandoned after Haringey manager Tom Loizou takes his team off the pitch amid reports of racist abuse from away supporters.
FINLAND: KuPS are crowned league champions for the first time in 43 years as they win 2-0 at second-place Inter Turku on the final day of the season.
GERMANY: A train carrying Freiburg fans home from their 1-0 loss away to Union Berlin catches fire and three people suffer from smoke inhalation. In a bid to help out, Union Berlin offer away supporters lodging in the VIP section of their Stadion An der Alten Forsterei.
SPAIN: Real Madrid lose in La Liga for the first time this season, going down 1-0 at Mallorca.

Sunday October 20

ENGLAND: Liverpool's 100 per cent start to the Premier League ends with a 1-1 draw at Manchester United which sees them fail to equal Manchester City's top-flight record of 18 successive wins.
ITALY: Internazionale's 4-3 win at Sassuolo is briefly suspended when a parachutist lands on the pitch as Romelu Lukaku is about to take a penalty for the visitors.

Monday October 21

USA: Sacramento Republic, who play in the USL, will join MLS in 2022 and become the top flight's 29th franchise.

Tuesday October 22

BRAZIL: Sixteen Flamengo fans are arrested before the team's Copa Libertadores semi-final second leg on Wednesday against Gremio. Those targeted are accused of planning to invade Maracana Stadium and of "threats to kill police, rob and cause damage".
NORTH KOREA: Next month's AFC Cup Final between North Korean army team April 25 and Lebanon's Al Ahed is moved from Pyongyang to a neutral ground in Shanghai. North Korea loses its hosting rights after the recent media blackout of the national team's World Cup qualifier against South Korea. WS

Euro 2020

GAVIN HAMILTON

Belgium lead way to finals

Six sides secure automatic qualification for next year

Belgium became the first country to qualify for next summer's Euro 2020 finals, sealing their place by beating San Marino 9-0 and spreading the goals around eight different scorers.

Three days later Belgium extended their 100 per cent record in the group with a 2-0 win in Kazakhstan, while second-placed Russia confirmed their finals' place with a comfortable 5-0 victory in Cyprus.

Italy were the next team to qualify, putting the painful memories of their failure to reach the 2018 World Cup behind them with a 2-0 triumph over a limited Greece side in Rome.

Ukraine confirmed qualification and also their supremacy over Portugal in Group B with a 2-1 victory in Kiev.

Poland qualified as winners of Group G with a 2-0 win over North Macedonia in Warsaw, three days after a 3-0 victory in Latvia, where Robert Lewandowski scored all three Polish goals.

Spain's qualification from Group F was delayed following a 1-1 draw with Norway in Oslo. Saul Niguez had put Spain in front before Joshua King equalised from the penalty spot in injury time.

Three days later it was Spain's turn for a late goal when Rodrigo's strike in Sweden cancelled out Marcus Berg's header to give the Spanish the point needed to secure qualification.

In Group C, Holland recovered from going a goal down to Northern Ireland to win 3-1 in Amsterdam and go back to the top of the group.

Republic of Ireland suffered a major setback when they lost 2-0 to Switzerland in Geneva, three days after a goalless draw in Georgia.

Croatia took a major step towards qualification with a 3-0 win over Hungary in Split, followed by a 1-1 draw with Wales.

Olivier Giroud looked to have given France victory over Turkey in Paris, and second place in the group, but fellow sub Kaan Ayhan headed a late equalizer to put French celebrations on hold.

In Group J, Finland suffered a setback when losing 4-1 to Bosnia, but bounced back with a 3-0 victory over Armenia in Helsinki.

England missed out on securing their place after losing 2-1 in the Czech Republic – their first defeat in either a World Cup or Euro qualifier for almost 10 years. They got back on track with their next game, winning 6-0 in Bulgaria in a game marred by racism from home fans.

Settled...Belgium's Eden Hazard (no10) gets on the scoresheet against San Marino

PERMUTATIONS

Group A: England need a win over Montenegro or Kosovo to top the group. For second place the decisive game is between Czech Rep and Kosovo in Prague on November 14. Even if Kosovo win in Prague, the Czechs have the easier last game, away to Bulgaria, while Kosovo host England. If Kosovo take the second automatic qualifying spot, Czech Republic would replace Slovakia in the Path B play-offs.
Group B: Portugal, with games against Lithuania and Luxembourg, are favourites to take the second qualifying spot, ahead of Serbia, whose final game is against Ukraine. If they fail to overhaul Portugal, Serbia will be confirmed in Path C of the play-offs.
Group C: Third-placed Northern Ireland face crucial final games at home to Holland in Belfast and away to Germany in Frankfurt. If they were to overhaul the top two, the third-placed team (Holland or Germany) would drop into the Path A play-offs. If Northern Ireland finish third, they will be confirmed in Path B of the play-offs. Belarus, after topping their Nations

League group last year, are assured of a place in Path D of the play-offs.

Group D: Switzerland, with games at home to Georgia and away to Gibraltar, have a strong chance of finishing a tight group, ahead of Denmark and Republic of Ireland, who meet on the final matchday. If Switzerland qualify automatically, Iceland could be handed a lifeline through Path A of the play-offs. However, Republic of Ireland would be unlikely to enter Path B of the play-offs. Georgia are already assured of a place in Path D of the play-offs.

Group E: Croatia will qualify as group winners if they draw or beat Slovakia in Rijeka in their remaining match. Hungary will confirm an automatic place if they beat Wales in Cardiff in their final game, but Slovakia could still overhaul them. Wales can still qualify automatically if they win their final matches in Azerbaijan and at home to Hungary, and Slovakia fail to beat Croatia and Azerbaijan. If they fail to qualify automatically, both Slovakia and Wales will enter Path B of the play-offs. If Hungary were to wish out on automatic qualification, they would enter Path C of the play-offs.

Group F: With Spain qualified, second-placed Sweden face third-place Romania in a crucial penultimate game in Bucharest. Sweden have the easier final match, at home to Faroe Islands, while Romania must travel to Spain. If they fail to overhaul Sweden, Romania will enter the play-offs, either in Path A or Path C, along with fourth-place Norway, who are guaranteed a place in Path C. If Sweden finish third in the group, they will enter Path B of the play-offs.

Retiring...Scotland's Robert Snodgrass (left) made his final international appearance against Russia

Group G: Austria need a point from their final two games against North Macedonia and Latvia to take second place behind already qualified Poland. North Macedonia are guaranteed a place in Path D of the play-offs, while Israel, despite their current fifth place in the group, could enter the play-offs via Path A or C.

Group H: The two top-placed teams, Turkey and France, will qualify automatically if they take at least a point apiece from their final matches, against Iceland and Andorra, and Moldova and Albania, respectively. Iceland have a slim chance of overhauling Turkey, but are more likely to finish third and take a place in Path A of the play-offs.

Group I: With Belgium and Russia having already qualified automatically, fourth-placed Scotland, who topped their Nations League group last year, are guaranteed a place in Path C of the play-offs.

Group J: With Italy already qualified, Finland will secure an historic first qualification if they beat or draw with Liechtenstein in Helsinki on November 15. Bosnia, having topped their Nations League group last year, will enter Path B of the play-offs. WS

Internationals

2022 WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

ASIA SECTION

2nd round

Group A

Oct10 - Guangzhou
China 7 (Yang Xu 6, 19, 24, 31, Wu Lei 17, Wu Xi 45+1, Elkeson 75)
Guam 0
HT: 6-0. **Att:** 39,987. **Ref:** Reda (Leb)

Oct10 - Dubai, UAE
Syria 2 (Al Somah 26, 60)
Maldives 1 (Ashfaq 70)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 5,500. **Ref:** Nasaruddin (Mly)
Sent off: Al Salih (Syria) 65

Oct15 - Bacolod
Philippines 0
China 0
Att: 2,982. **Ref:** Asimov (Uzb)

Oct15 - Dubai, UAE
Syria 4 (Al Somah 3, 44, 83, Al Mawas 90+3)
Guam 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 2,050. **Ref:** Mashentsev (Kyr)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Syria	3	3	0	0	11	3	9
China	3	2	1	0	12	0	7
Philippines	3	1	1	1	6	6	4
Maldives	3	1	0	2	2	7	3
Guam	4	0	0	4	1	16	0

Group B

Oct10 - Canberra
Australia 5 (Maclaren 6, 19, 90, Souttar 23, Rajbanshi og 59)
Nepal 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 18,563. **Ref:** Alkatiri (Ins)

Oct10 - Amman
Jordan 0
Kuwait 0
Att: 10,720. **Ref:** Sato (Jap)

Oct15 - Amman
Jordan 3 (Shelbaieh pen 56, Ersan 78, Faisal 88)
Nepal 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,863. **Ref:** Gulmurodi (Taj)

Oct15 - Kaohsiung
Taiwan 1 (Chen Yi-wei 21)
Australia 7 (Taggart 12, 19, Irvine 34, 37, Souttar 73, 89, Maclaren 84)
HT: 1-4. **Att:** 3,217. **Ref:** Pechsri (Tha)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Australia	3	3	0	0	15	1	9
Jordan	3	2	1	0	5	1	7
Kuwait	3	1	1	1	7	3	4
Nepal	4	1	0	3	2	15	3
Taiwan	3	0	0	3	2	11	0

Group C

Oct10 - Tehran
Iran 14 (Nourollahi 5, Azmoun 11, 35, 44, Kanaani 18, Taremi 22, 54, Ansarifard 40, 48, 60, 88, Mohebi 65, 67, Mehrdad Mohammadi 85)
Cambodia 0
HT: 7-0. **Att:** 15,823. **Ref:** Banerjee (Ind)

Oct10 - Basra
Iraq 2 (M Ali 37, Adnan pen 79)
Hong Kong 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 32,340. **Ref:** Al Jeneibi (UAE)

Oct15 - Riffa
Bahrain 1 (Al Hardan pen 65)
Iran 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Kovalenko (Uzb)

Oct15 - Phnom Penh
Cambodia 0
Iraq 4 (Bayesh 22, M Ali 41, Attwan 57, Ibrahim 62)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 48,258. **Ref:** Daypuyat (Phi)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iraq	3	2	1	0	7	1	7
Bahrain	3	2	1	0	3	1	7
Iran	3	2	0	1	16	1	6
Hong Kong	3	0	1	2	1	5	1
Cambodia	4	0	1	3	1	20	1

Group D

Oct10 - Buraidah
Saudi Arabia 3 (Asiri 28, 67, Al Hamdan 61)
Singapore 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 14,560. **Ref:** Kim Hee-gon (SKo)

Oct10 - Tashkent
Uzbekistan 5 (Kodirkulov 3, Shomurodov 33, Iskanderov 53, Tukhtakhodjaev 72, Sergeev 90)
Yemen 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 28,571. **Ref:** Hattab (Syr)

Oct15 - Al Ram
Palestine 0
Saudi Arabia 0
Att: 12,000. **Ref:** Al Kaf (Oma)

Oct15 - Singapore
Singapore 1 (Ikhsan 45+1)
Uzbekistan 3 (Ahmedov 15, Shomurodov 51, 90+2)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 12,547. **Ref:** Shen (Chn)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uzbekistan	3	2	0	1	8	3	6
Saudi Arabia	3	1	2	0	5	2	5
Palestine	3	1	1	1	3	2	4
Singapore	4	1	1	2	5	9	4
Yemen	3	0	2	1	4	9	2

Group E

Oct10 - Dhaka
Bangladesh 0
Qatar 2 (Abdurisag 28, Boudiaf 90+2)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 24,570. **Ref:** Heidari (Irn)

Oct10 - Seeb
Oman 3 (Al Muqbali 27, 38, Mohsin Al Ghassani pen 61)
Afghanistan 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Al Ali (Jor)

Oct15 - Kolkata
India 1 (Khan 88)
Bangladesh 1 (Uddin 42)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 53,286. **Ref:** Tufaylieh (Syr)

Oct15 - Al Wakrah
Qatar 2 (Akram Afif 2, Almoez Ali 71)
Oman 1 (Al Alawi 65)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 26,731. **Ref:** Fu (Chn)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Qatar	4	3	1	0	10	1	10
Oman	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
Afghanistan	3	1	0	2	1	9	3
India	3	0	2	1	2	3	2
Bangladesh	3	0	1	2	1	4	1

Group F

Oct10 - Saitama
Japan 6 (Minamino 22, Yoshida 29, Nagatomo 33, Nagai 40, Endo 57, Kamada 82)
Mongolia 0
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 43,122. **Ref:** Chae (SKo)

Oct10 - Bishkek
Kyrgyzstan 7 (Bernhardt 5, 10, pen 87, Shukurov 20, 71, Alykulov 26, Kichin 45)
Myanmar 0
HT: 5-0. **Att:** 13,000. **Ref:** Al Ali (UAE)

Oct15 - Ulaanbaatar
Mongolia 1 (Tsedenbal pen 57)
Kyrgyzstan 2 (Alykulov 13, Murzaev 42)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 2,182. **Ref:** Abo Yehia (Leb)

Oct15 - Dushanbe
Tajikistan 0
Japan 3 (Minamino 53, 55, Asano 82)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 19,100. **Ref:** Mohammed (Irq)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Japan	3	3	0	0	11	0	9
Kyrgyzstan	3	2	0	1	9	2	6
Tajikistan	3	2	0	1	2	3	6
Mongolia	4	1	0	3	2	9	3
Myanmar	3	0	0	3	0	10	0

Group G

Oct10 - Dubai
United Arab Emirates 5 (Ibrahim 40, Mabkhout 51, pen 63, 72, T Ahmed 90+3)
Indonesia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 6,768. **Ref:** Makhadmeh (Jor)

Oct10 - Hanoi
Vietnam 1 (Nguyen Quang Hai 40)
Malaysia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 38,256. **Ref:** Bonyadifard (Irn)

Oct15 - Gianyar
Indonesia 1 (Bachdim 84)
Vietnam 3 (Do Duy Manh 26, Que Ngoc Hai pen 55, Nguyen Tien Linh 61)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 8,237. **Ref:** Al Khudayr (Sau)

Oct15 - Pathum Thani
Thailand 2 (Teerasil 26, Ekanit 51)
United Arab Emirates 1 (Mabkhout 45+2)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 16,057. **Ref:** Perera (Sri)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Thailand	3	2	1	0	5	1	7
Vietnam	3	2	1	0	4	1	7
UAE	3	2	0	1	8	3	6
Malaysia	3	1	0	2	4	5	3
Indonesia	4	0	0	4	3	14	0

Group H

Oct10 - Beirut
Lebanon 2 (El Helwe 5, N Matar 64)
Turkmenistan 1 (Annadurdyyew 62)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 7,820. **Ref:** Okabe (Jap)

Oct10 - Hwaseong
South Korea 8 (Son Heung-min 10, pen 45+5, Kim Shin-wook 17, 30, 54, 64, Hwang Hee-chan 20, Kwon Chang-hoon 76)
Sri Lanka 0
HT: 5-0. **Att:** 23,522. **Ref:** Akrami (Irn)

Oct15 - Pyongyang
North Korea 0
South Korea 0
Att: 100. **Ref:** Al Jassim (Qat)

Oct15 - Colombo
Sri Lanka 0
Lebanon 3 (Maatouk pen 15, El Helwe pen 38, 81)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 1,052. **Ref:** Mahfoodh (Bhn)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Korea	3	2	1	0	10	0	7
North Korea	3	2	1	0	3	0	7
Lebanon	3	2	0	1	5	3	6
Turkmenistan	3	1	0	2	3	4	3
Sri Lanka	4	0	0	4	0	14	0

● *The 8 group winners and the 4 runners-up with the best record will qualify for the 3rd round. Qatar are participating in this stage of the qualifiers even though, as 2022 World Cup hosts, they have an automatic place in the finals*

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS

Group A

Oct11 - Prague
Czech Republic 2 (Brabec 9, Ondrasek 85)
England 1 (Kane pen 5)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 18,651. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)
Czech Republic: Vaclik - Coufal, Celustka, Brabec, Boril, Soucek, Kral, Masopust (Zmrhal 90), Darida, Jankto (Kopic 82), Schick (Ondrasek 65).
England: Pickford - Trippier, Keane, Maguire, Rose, J Henderson, Rice (Abraham 88), Sancho (Rashford 73), Mount (Barkley 72), Sterling, Kane.

Oct11 - Podgorica
Montenegro 0
Bulgaria 0
Att: 2,743. **Ref:** Ekberg (Swe)
Montenegro: Petkovic - Marusic, Savic (Kosovic 39), Simic, Sekulic, Lagator, Vukcevic, Boljevic, Jovovic (M Jankovic 67), Haksabanovic (Mirkovic 82), Beciraj.
Bulgaria: P Iliev - Pashov, K Dimitrov, Zanev, Nedyalkov, S Popov (Kostadinov 63), G Ivanov, Marcelinho (Isa 70), Malinov, Wanderson (Karagaren 77), Kraev.

Oct14 - Sofia
Bulgaria 0
England 6 (Rashford 7, Barkley 20, 32, Sterling 45+3, 69, Kane 85)
HT: 0-4. **Att:** 17,481. **Ref:** Bebek (Cro)
Bulgaria: P Iliev - Pashov, Terziev, Sarmov (Kraev 46), Hadzhiev, Zanev, Despodov, I Popov, Kostadinov, Wanderson (Malinov 76), Isa (G Ivanov 68).
England: Pickford - Trippier, Maguire, Mings, Chilwell, J Henderson, Winks, Barkley (Mount 72), Sterling (Sancho 73), Kane, Rashford (Wilson 76).

Oct14 - Pristina
Kosovo 2 (Rrahmani 10, Muriqi 34)
Montenegro 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 12,600. **Ref:** Soares Dias (Por)
Kosovo: Muric - Vojvoda (Zhegrova 88), Rrahmani, Aliti, Kololli, Shala (Rashkaj 82), V Berisha, Hadergjonaj, Celina (Hasani 90+2), Rashica, Muriqi.
Montenegro: Petkovic (Mijatovic 15) - Marusic, Lagator, Simic, Bulatovic, Boljevic, Vukcevic, Scekic, Jovovic (Jankovic 74), Mugosa, Kosovic (Beciraj 46).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England	6	5	0	1	26	6	15
Czech Rep	6	4	0	2	11	9	12
Kosovo	6	3	2	1	12	10	11
Montenegro	7	0	3	4	3	15	3
Bulgaria	7	0	3	4	5	17	3

Group B

Oct11 - Lisbon
Portugal 3 (Bernardo Silva 16, Cristiano Ronaldo 65, Goncalo Guedes 89)
Luxembourg 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 47,305. **Ref:** Stefanski (Pol)
Portugal: Rui Patricio - Nelson Semedo, Pepe, Ruben Dias, Raphael Guerreiro, Bruno Fernandes, Danilo Pereira, Joao Moutinho (Ruben Neves 89), Bernardo Silva (Goncalo Guedes 77), Cristiano Ronaldo, Joao Felix (Joao Mario 88).
Luxembourg: Moris - Jans, Chanot, Gerson, Carlson, V Thill (Bensi 88), Bohnert (Sinani 46), Barreiro, O Thill, Rodrigues, Turpel (Da Mota 59).

Oct11 - Kharkiv
Ukraine 2 (Malinovskyi 29, 58)
Lithuania 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 32,500. **Ref:** Lechner (Aut)
Ukraine: Pyatov - Bolbat, Kryvtsov, Matviyenko, Sobol, Stepanenko (Sydorchuk 73), Yarmolenko (Tsygankov 64), Zinchenko, Malinovskyi, Marlos (Konoplyanka 59), Junior Moraes.
Lithuania: Cerniauskas - Mikoliunas, Klimavicius, Girdvainis, Andriuskevicius (Simkus 62), Vorobjovas, Zulpa, Verbickas, Novikovas, Laukzemis (D Matulevicius 77), Golubickas (Lasickas 73).

Oct14 - Vilnius
Lithuania 1 (Kazlauskas 79)
Serbia 2 (A Mitrovic 49, 53)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,787. **Ref:** Raczkowski (Pol)
Lithuania: Cerniauskas - Baravykas, Klimavicius, Girdvainis, Mikoliunas, Simkus, Lasickas, Vorobjovas, Golubickas (Kazlauskas 73), Verbickas (Zulpa 56), D Matulevicius (Laukzemis 64).
Serbia: Dmitrovic - Miletic, Milenkovic, Kolarov, Mladenovic, Milivojevic (Lukic 72), Maksimovic, Radonjic, Ljajic (Gudelj 85), Kostic (Gacinovic 46), A Mitrovic.

Oct14 - Kiev
Ukraine 2 (Yaremchuk 6, Yarmolenko 27)
Portugal 1 (Cristiano Ronaldo pen 72)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 65,883. **Ref:** Taylor (Eng)
Ukraine: Pyatov - Karavaev, Kryvtsov, Matviyenko, Mykolenko (Plastun 90+4), Malinovskyi, Stepanenko, Zinchenko, Yarmolenko, Marlos (Konoplyanka 63), Yaremchuk (Kovalenko 73). *Sent off: Stepanenko 72.*
Portugal: Rui Patricio - Nelson Semedo, Pepe, Ruben Dias, Raphael Guerreiro, Danilo Pereira, Bernardo Silva, Joao Moutinho (Bruno Fernandes 56), Joao Mario (Bruma 68), Goncalo Guedes (Joao Felix 46), Cristiano Ronaldo.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ukraine (QF)	7	6	1	0	15	2	19
Portugal	6	3	2	1	14	6	11
Serbia	6	3	1	2	12	13	10
Luxembourg	6	1	1	4	5	11	4
Lithuania	7	0	1	6	5	19	1

Group C

Oct10 - Minsk
Belarus 0
Estonia 0
Att: 11,300. **Ref:** De Burgos Bengoechea (Spa)
Belarus: Gutor - Matveichyk, Martynovich, Politsevich, Polyakov, Yablonski (Lisakovich 83), Maevski, Savitski (Bakhar 59), Dragun, Stasevich, Skavysh (Laptev 64).
Estonia: Lepmets - Teniste, Baranov, Mets, Kallaste, Kreida, Kait, Zenjov (Liivak 59), Vassiljev, Ojamaa (Miller 89), Sorga (Sappinen 80).

Oct10 - Rotterdam
Holland 3 (Depay 80, 90+4, L De Jong 90+1)
Northern Ireland 1 (Magennis 75)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 41,348. **Ref:** Bastien (Fra)
Holland: Cillessen - Dumfries (L De Jong 78), De Ligt, Van Dijk, Blind, Wijnaldum, De Roon (Van de Beek 66), F De Jong, Bergwijn, Depay, Babel (Malen 66).
N Ireland: Peacock-Farrell - Smith, Cathcart, J Evans, Ferguson, C Evans (Flanagan 87), Dallas, McNair, Davis, Saville (Thompson 83), Lafferty (Magennis 66).

Oct13 - Minsk
Belarus 1 (Dragun 54)
Holland 2 (Wijnaldum 32, 41)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 21,639. **Ref:** Sidiropoulos (Gre)
Belarus: Gutor - Veretilo, Martynovich, Naumov, Polyakov, Kovalev (Skavysh 60), Yablonski, Dragun, Bakhar (Ebong 70), Stasevich, Laptev (Shevchenko 83).
Holland: Cillessen - Veltman, De Ligt, Van Dijk, Blind, Van de Beek (De Roon 67), Wijnaldum, F De Jong, Bergwijn (Babel 89), Malen, Promes (L De Jong 67).

Oct13 - Tallinn
Estonia 0
Germany 3 (Gundogan 51, 57, Werner 71)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,062. **Ref:** Kabakov (Bul)
Estonia: Lepmets - Baranov, Tamm, Mets, Pikk, Antonov, Kams, Ainsalu, Vassiljev (Kait 61), Liivak (Ojamaa 77), Sappinen (Zenjov 56).
Germany: Neuer - Klostermann, Can, Sule, Halstenberg, Gundogan, Kimmich, Havertz, Reus (Serdar 77), Brandt (Amiri 86), Waldschmidt (Werner 66). *Sent off: Can14.*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Holland	6	5	0	1	19	7	15
Germany	6	5	0	1	20	6	15
N Ireland	6	4	0	2	8	7	12
Belarus	7	1	1	5	4	12	4
Estonia	7	0	1	6	2	21	1

Group D

Oct12 - Copenhagen
Denmark 1 (Poulsen 85)
Switzerland 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 35,964. **Ref:** Kulbakov (Bls)
Denmark: Schmeichel - Dalsgaard, Kjaer, Christensen (M Jorgensen 87), J Larsen (Ankersen 80), Schone (Hojbjerg 65), Delaney, Poulsen, Eriksen, Braithwaite, Cornelius.
Switzerland: Sommer - Elvedi, Schar, Akanji, Lichtsteiner (Mbabu 68), Zakaria, Xhaka, Rodriguez (Drmic 87), Embolo, Mehmedi (Freuler 83), Seferovic.

Oct12 - Tbilisi
Georgia 0
Republic of Ireland 0
Att: 24,385. **Ref:** Guida (Ita)
Georgia: Loria - Kakabadze, Kashia, Grigalava, Tabidze, Kiteishvili (Aburjania 90), Kankava, Okriashvili (Lobjanidze 79), Ananidze, Qazaishvili, Kvilitaia (Shengelia 73).
Republic of Ireland: Randolph - Coleman, Duffy, Egan, Doherty, Whelan, Hourihane (Williams 90+3), Robinson (Browne 73), Hendrick, McClean, Collins (Connolly 79).

Oct15 - Gibraltar
Gibraltar 2 (Casciaro 66, R Chipolina 74)
Georgia 3 (Kharaishvili 10, Kankava 21, Kvilitaia 84)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 1,455. **Ref:** Valeri (Ita)
Gibraltar: Goldwin - Sergeant, R Chipolina, J Chipolina (Barnett 82), Mascarenhas-Olivero, Mouelhi, Badr (Andrew Hernandez 81), Casciaro, Walker (Pons 89), Britto, De Barr.
Georgia: Loria - Kakabadze, Khocholava, Grigalava, Navalovski (Kverkvelia 90+3), Kankava, Ananidze, Shengelia, Qazaishvili, Kharaishvili (Kiteishvili 60), Lobjanidze (Kvilitaia 68).

Oct15 - Geneva
Switzerland 2 (Seferovic 16, Duffy og 90+3)
Republic of Ireland 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 24,766. **Ref:** Marciniak (Pol)
Switzerland: Sommer - Elvedi, Schar, Akanji, Lichtsteiner (Freuler 70), Xhaka, Zakaria, Rodriguez, Embolo (Steffen 88), Mehmedi (Fernandes 28), Seferovic.
Republic of Ireland: Randolph - Egan, Duffy, Stevens, Whelan, Coleman, Hendrick, Browne, McClean, Connolly (Hogan 70), Collins (O'Dowda 46). *Sent off: Coleman 76.*

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rep of Ireland	7	3	3	1	6	4	12
Denmark	6	3	3	0	16	5	12
Switzerland	6	3	2	1	12	5	11
Georgia	7	2	2	3	7	10	8
Gibraltar	6	0	0	6	2	19	0

Group E

Oct10 - Split
Croatia 3 (Modric 5, Petkovic 24, 42)
Hungary 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 32,110. **Ref:** Orsato (Ita)
Croatia: Livakovic - Jedvaj, Lovren, Vida, Barisic, Modric (Kovacic 67), Brozovic, Rakitic (Vlasic 74), Perisic (Brekalo 60), Petkovic, Rebic.
Hungary: Gulacsi - Lovrencsics, Orban, Kadar (Lang 46), Korhut, Dzsudzsak (D Nagy 60), Kleinheisler, Vida, Holman, Sallai (Varga 76), Szalai. *Sent off: Kleinheisler 56.*

Oct10 - Trnava
Slovakia 1 (Kucka 53)
Wales 1 (Moore 25)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 18,071. **Ref:** Del Cerro Grande (Spa)
Slovakia: Dubravka - Pekarik, Gyomber, Skriniar, Hancko, Kucka, Lobotka, Hamsik, Rusnak, Bozenik (Safranko 86), Mak (Haraslin 79). *Sent off: Gyomber 88.*
Wales: Hennessey - C Roberts, Lockyer, Rodon, B Davies, Allen, Ampadu (Morrell 58), Bale, J Williams (Wilson 66), James, Moore.

Oct13 - Budapest
Hungary 1 (Korhut 10)
Azerbaijan 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 11,300. **Ref:** Higler (Hol)
Hungary: Gulacsi - Lovrencsics, Barath, Orban, Korhut, Kovacs (Siger 86), Vida, Dzsudzsak (D Nagy 71), Szoboszlai (Holman 76), Sallai, Szalai.
Azerbaijan: Balayev - Pashayev, Mustafazade, B Huseynov, Rahimov, Eddy, Garayev, R Almeida (Abdullayev 58), Ramazanov (Renat Dadashov 85), Sheydayev, Khalilzade (C Huseynov 66).

Oct13 - Cardiff
Wales 1 (Bale 45+3)
Croatia 1 (Vlasic 9)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 31,745. **Ref:** Kuipers (Hol)
Wales: Hennessey - C Roberts, Lockyer, Rodon, B Davies, Ampadu (Morrell 50), Bale, Allen, J Williams (Wilson 68), James, Moore (T Roberts 86).
Croatia: Livakovic - Jedvaj, Lovren, Vida, Barisic, Modric (Badelj 90), Kovacic (Rakitic 46), Perisic, Vlasic, Brekalo, Petkovic (Rebic 64).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Croatia	7	4	2	1	14	6	14
Hungary	7	4	0	3	8	9	12
Slovakia	6	3	1	2	10	8	10
Wales	6	2	2	2	6	6	8
Azerbaijan	6	0	1	5	5	14	1

Group F

Oct12 - Torshavn
Faroe Islands 0
Romania 3 (Puscas 74, Mitrita 83, Keseru 90+4)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,381. **Ref:** Agayev (Aze)
Faroe Islands: G Nielsen - Rolantsson, Vatnsdal, Gregersen, Baldvinsson (E Nielsen 78), Davidsen, Vatnhamar, B Olsen (Eriksen 71), Hansson, Bjartalid, K Olsen (Edmundsson 75).
Romania: Tatarusanu - Benzar, Nedelcearu, Chiriches (Rus 39), Bancu, Hagi, Anton, Stanciu, Coman (Mitrita 69), Puscas, Andone (Keseru 65).

Oct12 - Valletta
Malta 0
Sweden 4 (Danielson 11, Sebastian Larsson pen 58, pen 71, Agius og 66)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 10,702. **Ref:** Ivanov (Rus)
Malta: Bonello - Shaw, Agius, Z Muscat (J Caruana 66), Mbong, R Muscat (P Fenech 68), D Vella, Zerafa, Gambin, Nwoko, Effiong (Mifsud 75).
Sweden: Olsen - Lustig, Danielson, Granqvist, Bengtsson, Sebastian Larsson, K Olsson, Ekdal (Svensson 63), Forsberg, Berg (Andersson 79), Quaison (Isak 71).

Oct12 - Oslo
Norway 1 (King pen 90+4)
Spain 1 (Saul 47)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 25,200. **Ref:** Oliver (Eng)
Norway: Jarstein - Elabdellaoui, Nordtveit (Hovland 30), Ajer, Aleesami, S Johansen (Sorloth 63), Henriksen (Johnsen 83), Berge, Selnaes, Odegaard, King.
Spain: Kepa - Jesus Navas, Albiol, Sergio Ramos, Bernat (Inigo Martinez 88), Fabian, Busquets, Saul, Rodrigo, Oyarzabal (Rodri 78), Dani Ceballos (Cazorla 64).

Oct15 - Torshavn
Faroe Islands 1 (Baldvinsson 71)
Malta 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,677. **Ref:** Sanchez Martinez (Spa)
Faroe Islands: G Nielsen - Vatnsdal, Gregersen, Baldvinsson, Danielsen, B Olsen, Hansson, Davidsen (Frederiksberg 85), Vatnhamar, Edmundsson (Egilsson 90+3), Bjartalid (K Olsen 65).
Malta: Bonello - Z Muscat, Agius, Borg, Mbong, R Muscat (Zerafa 80), Grech, D Vella, Mifsud (Effiong 71), P Fenech (Gambin 71), Nwoko.

Oct15 - Bucharest
Romania 1 (Mitrita 62)
Norway 1 (Sorloth 90+2)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 29,854. **Ref:** Madden (Sco)
Romania: Tatarusanu - Benzar, Rus, Nedelcearu, Bancu, Marin, Anton (Bordeianu 84), Deac, Stanciu, Mitrita (Nistor 78), Puscas (Andone 63).
Norway: Jarstein - Elabdellaoui, Hovland, Ajer, Aleesami, S Johansen (Sorloth 46), Berge, Henriksen (Normann 81), Selnaes (Johnsen 67), King, Odegaard.

Oct15 - Stockholm
Sweden 1 (Berg 50)
Spain 1 (Rodrigo 90+2)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 49,712. **Ref:** Turpin (Fra)
Sweden: Olsen - Lustig, Lindelof, Granqvist, Bengtsson, Sebastian Larsson, K Olsson, Ekdal (Svensson 83), Forsberg, Quaison (Isak 77), Berg (Andersson 90+3).
Spain: De Gea (Kepa 60) - Carvajal (Jesus Navas 81), Albiol, Inigo Martinez, Bernat, Fabian, Rodri, Thiago (Rodrigo 66), Dani Ceballos, Gerard Moreno, Oyarzabal.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain (QF)	8	6	2	0	19	5	20
Sweden	8	4	3	1	18	9	15
Romania	8	4	2	2	17	8	14
Norway	8	2	5	1	13	10	11
Faroe Islands	8	1	0	7	4	23	3
Malta	8	1	0	7	2	18	3

Group G

Oct10 - Vienna
Austria 3 (Lazaro 41, Hinteregger 56, Sabitzer 88)
Israel 1 (Zahavi 34)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 26,200. **Ref:** Collum (Sco)
Austria: Stankovic - Posch (Trimmel 63), Dragovic, Hinteregger, Ulmer, Baumgartlinger, Ilsanker, Lazaro, Sabitzer, Laimer (Schaub 59), Arnautovic (Gregoritsch 82).
Israel: Marciano - Taha (Y Cohen 76), Tibi, Elhamed, Dasa, Bitton, Natcho, Tawatha (Ben Harush 54), Solomon, Dabbur (Weissman 70), Zahavi.

Oct10 - Riga
Latvia 0
Poland 3 (Lewandowski 9, 13, 76)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 7,107. **Ref:** Ozkahya (Tur)
Latvia: Vanins - Rugins, Oss, Dubra, Jagodinskis, Maksimenko, Kigurs (Ciganiks 86), Laizans (Tobers 72), J Ikaunieks, Gutkovskis, Rakels (Karasausks 72).
Poland: Szczesny - Kedziora, Glik, Bednarek, Rybus (Reca 80), Klich (Piatek 60), Krychowiak, Szymanski, Zielinski, Grosicki (Frankowski 77), Lewandowski.

Oct10 - Skopje
North Macedonia 2 (Elmas 50, 68)
Slovenia 1 (Ilicic pen 90+5)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 16,500. **Ref:** Makkelie (Hol)
North Macedonia: Dimitrievski - Ristovski (Zajkov 81), Musliu, Ristevski, Nikolov, Spirovski, Ademi (Toshevski 77), Alioski, Elmas, Pandev (Trickovski 66), Nestorovski.
Slovenia: Oblak - Stojanovic, Aljaz Struna, Mevlja, Balkovec, Bezjak (Beric 79), Krhin (Popovic 48), Kurtic, Verbic (Zajc 65), Ilicic, Sporar.

Oct13 - Warsaw
Poland 2 (Frankowski 74, Milik 80)
North Macedonia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 52,894. **Ref:** Mateu Lahoz (Spa)
Poland: Szczesny - Bereszynski, Glik, Bednarek, Reca, Goralski, Krychowiak, Szymanski (Milik 68), Zielinski (Piatek 90+2), Grosicki (Frankowski 73), Lewandowski.
North Macedonia: Dimitrievski - Ristovski (Radeski 81), Musliu, Ristevski, Bejtulai, Nikolov (Stoilov 88), Spirovski, Alioski, Elmas, Pandev, Nestorovski (Trajkovski 74).

Oct13 - Ljubljana
Slovenia 0
Austria 1 (Posch 21)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,108. **Ref:** Cakir (Tur)
Slovenia: Oblak - Stojanovic, Aljaz Struna, Mevlja, Balkovec, Bezjak (Zajc 61), Krhin (Popovic 79), Kurtic, Verbic (Beric 69), Ilicic, Sporar. *Sent off: Popovic 89.*
Austria: Stankovic - Posch, Dragovic, Hinteregger, Ulmer, Ilsanker, Baumgartlinger, Lazaro (Trimmel 88), Sabitzer (Kainz 90+2), Laimer, Gregoritsch (Onisiwo 83).

Oct15 - Beer Sheva
Israel 3 (Dabbur 16, 42, Zahavi 26)
Latvia 1 (Kamess 40)
HT: 3-1. **Att:** 9,150. **Ref:** Hunter (NI)
Israel: Marciano - Taha, Bitton, Elhamed, Dasa, Natcho, Glazer, Tawatha (Menachem 78), Saba (Elmkies 76), Dabbur (Weissman 84), Zahavi.
Latvia: Steinbors - Savalnieks, Cernomordijs, Oss, Jagodinskis, Jurkovskis, J Ikaunieks (Ontuzans 86), Tarasovs, Kigurs (Laizans 68), Kamess (D Ikaunieks 78), Gutkovskis.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Poland (QF)	8	6	1	1	13	2	19
Austria	8	5	1	2	17	7	16
N Macedonia	8	3	2	3	10	11	11
Slovenia	8	3	2	3	13	8	11
Israel	8	3	2	3	15	15	11
Latvia	8	0	0	8	2	27	0

Group H

Oct11 - Andorra La Vella
Andorra 1 (Vales 63)
Moldova 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 947. **Ref:** Lardot (Blg)
Andorra: Gomes - Jesus Rubio, Llovera, Lima, San Nicolas, Clemente (Rebes 73), Vales, Pujol (Rodriguez 83), Cervos, M Vieira, C Martinez (Alaez 61).
Moldova: Koselev - Graur, Posmac, Prepelita, Reabciuk, Mihaliov (Dedov 72), Cebotaru, Ionita, Suvorov, Boiciuc, Ginsari. *Sent off: Ginsari 55.*

Oct11 - Reykjavik
Iceland 0
France 1 (Giroud pen 66)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 9,719. **Ref:** Rocchi (Ita)
Iceland: Halldorsson - Palsson, Arnason, R Sigurdsson, Skulason, J Gudmundsson (Bodvarsson 15), Sigurjonsson (Finnbogason 73), B Bjarnason, Traustason (A Sigurdsson 81), G Sigurdsson, Sigthorsson.
France: Mandanda - Pavard, Varane, Lenglet, Digne, Sissoko, Tolisso, Matuidi, Coman (Ikone 88), Giroud (Ben Yedder 78), Griezmann.

Oct11 - Istanbul
Turkey 1 (Tosun 90)
Albania 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 41,438. **Ref:** Hategan (Rom)
Turkey: Mert - Mehmet Celik, Ayhan (Caglar 46), Merih, Cengiz Umit, Ozan (Yusuf 80), Mahmut, Emre Belozoglu (Irfan 66), Tosun, Burak, Calhanoglu.
Albania: Strakosha - Ismajli, Dermaku, Gjimshiti, Gjasula, Veseli, Bare, Memushaj (Abrashi 72), Lenjani (Roshi 57), Cikalleshi (Balaj 84), Manaj.

Oct14 - Paris
France 1 (Giroud 76)
Turkey 1 (Ayhan 82)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 72,154. **Ref:** Brych (Ger)
France: Mandanda - Pavard, Varane, Lenglet, Hernandez, Tolisso, Matuidi (Lemar 77), Sissoko, Griezmann, Coman (Ikone 87), Ben Yedder (Giroud 72).
Turkey: Mert - Mehmet Celik (Ayhan 53), Merih, Caglar, Cengiz Umut, Okay (Calhanoglu 46), Ozan (Tosun 81), Mahmut, Irfan, Karaman, Burak.

Oct14 - Reykjavik
Iceland 2 (A Sigurdsson 38, Sigthorsson 65)
Andorra 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 7,169. **Ref:** Bognar (Hun)
Iceland: Halldorsson - Palsson, R Sigurdsson (Ingason 68), Fjoluson, Skulason, A Sigurdsson, G Sigurdsson, B Bjarnason (Hallfredsson 70), Traustason, Finnbogason (Bodvarsson 64), Sigthorsson.
Andorra: Gomes - San Nicolas, Lima, Llovera, Cervos, Rodriguez, Rebes, Vales, A Martinez (M Garcia 80), Alaez (Gomez 87), M Vieira (Fernandez 60).

Oct14 - Chisinau
Moldova 0
Albania 4 (Cikalleshi 22, Bare 34, Trashi 40, Manaj 90)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 4,367. **Ref:** Kavanagh (Eng)
Moldova: Koselev - Graur, Prepelita, Posmac, Mudrac (Rozgoniuc 31), Reabciuk, Suvorov (Boiciuc 60), Anton, Cebotaru, Ionita, Sidorenco (Sandu 80).
Albania: Strakosha - Veseli, Ismajli (Kumbulla 89), Dermaku, Gjimshiti, Abrashi, Gjasula, Trashi, Bare (Selahi 89), Manaj, Cikalleshi (Roshi 76).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Turkey	8	6	1	1	16	3	19
France	8	6	1	1	21	5	19
Iceland	8	5	0	3	12	10	15
Albania	8	4	0	4	14	10	12
Andorra	8	1	0	7	1	16	3
Moldova	8	1	0	7	2	22	3

Group I

Oct10 - Brussels
Belgium 9 (Lukaku 28, 41, Chadli 31, Brolli og 35, Alderweireld 43, Tielemans 45+1, Benteke 79, Verschaeren pen 84, Castagne 90)
San Marino 0
HT: 6-0. **Att:** 34,504. **Ref:** Papapetrou (Gre)
Belgium: Courtois - Alderweireld, Vermaelen, Vertonghen, Castagne, Vanaken, Tielemans, Chadli, Mertens (Verschaeren 63), E Hazard (Carrasco 63), Lukaku (Benteke 76).

San Marino: S Benedettini - Manuel Battistini, Brolli, D Simoncini, Palazzi, Grandoni (Lunadei 78), Mularoni, E Golinucci, Giardi (Hirsch 46), Nanni, Berardi (A Golinucci 46).

Oct10 - Nur-Sultan
Kazakhstan 1 (Erlanov 34)
Cyprus 2 (Sotiriou 73, N Ioannou 84)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 11,769. **Ref:** Pawson (Eng)
Kazakhstan: Nepohodov - Erlanov, Maliy, Marochkin, Vorogovskiy, Pertsukh, Abiken (Fedin 80), Suyumbayev, Kuat (Tagybergen 90), Islamkhan, Zhangylyshbay (Khizhnichenko 61).
Cyprus: Panayi - Mintikkis (Zachariou 46), Merkis (Spoljaric 61), Laifis, N Ioannou, Kousoulos, Artymatas, Kyriakou, Kosti, Papoulis (Margaca 88), Sotiriou.

Oct10 - Moscow
Russia 4 (Dzyuba 57, 70, Ozdoev 60, Golovin 84)
Scotland 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 65,703. **Ref:** Kehlet (Den)
Russia: Guilherme - Fernandes, Semenov, Dzhikiya, Kudryashov, Ozdoev, Barinov, Ionov (Akhmetov 79), Golovin, Zhirkov (Cheryshev 66), Dzyuba (Komlichenko 86).
Scotland: Marshall - Palmer, Devlin, Mulgrew, Robertson, C McGregor, Fleck (Armstrong 81), Fraser (Christie 68), McGinn, Snodgrass, Burke (Shankland 46).

Oct13 - Nicosia
Cyprus 0
Russia 5 (Cheryshev 9, 90+2, Ozdoev 23, Dzyuba 79, Golovin 89)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 9,439. **Ref:** Jovanovic (Ser)
Cyprus: Panayi (Pardo 40) - Kyriakou, Merkis, Laifis, Kousoulos, M Ioannou, Artymatas, Spoljaric (Papoulis 80), N Ioannou, Kosti, Zachariou (Margaca 36). *Sent off: Laifis 28.*
Russia: Guilherme - Petrov (Karavaev 37), Semenov, Dzhikiya, Kudryashov, Ozdoev, Akhmetov (Kuzyaev 61), Golovin, Ionov (Bakaev 77), Dzyuba, Cheryshev.

Oct13 - Nur-Sultan
Kazakhstan 0
Belgium 2 (Batshuayi 21, Meunier 53)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 26,801. **Ref:** Mazeika (Lit)
Kazakhstan: Nepohodov - Marochkin, Maliy, Kerymzhanov, Beisebekov, Zhukov (Zhangylyshbay 84), Abiken, Shomko, Fedin (Pertsukh 71), Islamkhan, Suyumbayev (Vorogovskiy 61).
Belgium: Courtois - Alderweireld, Vermaelen (Mechele 90+2), Vertonghen, Meunier, Praet, Witsel, T Hazard, Mertens (Carrasco 78), E Hazard, Batshuayi (Benteke 78).

Oct13 - Glasgow
Scotland 6 (McGinn 12, 27 45+1, Shankland 65, Findlay 67, Armstrong 87)
San Marino 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 20,699. **Ref:** Brisard (Fra)
Scotland: McLaughlin - Palmer, Devlin, Findlay, Robertson, McTominay, C McGregor (Russell 70), Christie, McGinn (Armstrong 70), Forrest, Shankland.
San Marino: A Simoncini - Manuel Battistini, Censoni, Brolli, D'Addario (Grandoni 46), Mularoni, A Golinucci, Gasperoni, Berardi (Ceccaroli 80), Giardi (Hirsch 46), Nanni.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Belgium (QF)	8	8	0	0	30	1	24
Russia (QF)	8	7	0	1	27	4	21
Cyprus	8	3	1	4	13	12	10
Scotland	8	3	0	5	11	17	9
Kazakhstan	8	2	1	5	9	13	7
San Marino	8	0	0	8	0	43	0

Group J

Oct12 - Zenica
Bosnia-Herzegovina 4 (Hajrovic 29, Pjanic pen 37, 58, Hodzic 73)
Finland 1 (Pohjanpalo 79)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 8,193. **Ref:** Kruzliak (Slk)
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Sehic - Kvrzic, A Kovacevic, Bicakcic, Kolasinac, Cimirot, Pjanic (Krunic 76), Saric (Jajalo 71), Visca (Hajrovic 18), Hodzic, Gojak.
Finland: Hradecky - Raitala, Toivio, Arajuuri (S Vaisanen 30), Uronen, Lod, Kamara, Sparv (Kauko 71), Soiri (Pohjanpalo 46), Tuominen, Pukki.

Oct12 - Rome
Italy 2 (Jorginho pen 63, Bernardeschi 78)
Greece 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 56,274. **Ref:** Karasev (Rus)
Italy: Donnarumma - D'Ambrosio, Bonucci, Acerbi, Spinazzola, Barella (Zaniolo 87), Jorginho, Verratti, Chiesa (Bernardeschi 39), Immobile (Belotti 79), Insigne.
Greece: Paschalakis - Bakakis, Hatzidiakos, Siovas, Stafylidis, Kourbelis, Bouchalakis (Giannoulis 75), Limnios, Zeca, Koulouris (Donis 67), Bakasetas (Mantalos 80).

Oct12 - Vaduz
Liechtenstein 1 (Y Frick 72)
Armenia 1 (Barseghyan 19)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 2,285. **Ref:** Kovacs (Rom)
Liechtenstein: B Buchel - Malin, Kaufmann, Goppel, Rechsteiner, M Buchel, Polverino (Sele 83), Meier (Yildiz 70), Hasler, Salanovic, Gubser (Y Frick 67).
Armenia: Hayrapetyan - Hambardzumyan, Haroyan, Ishkhanyan, A Hovhannisyan, Pizzelli (Malakyan 60), Hovsepyan (Miranyan 83), Ghazaryan (Ozbiliz 88), Barseghyan, Karapetyan, Adamyan.

Oct15 - Turku
Finland 3 (Jensen 31, Pukki 61, 88)
Armenia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 7,231. **Ref:** Gil Manzano (Spa)
Finland: Hradecky - Raitala, Toivio, S Vaisanen, Uronen, Lod, Kauko, Kamara (Schuller 87), Pukki, Lappalainen (Soiri 61), Jensen (Pohjanpalo 53).
Armenia: Hayrapetyan - Hambardzumyan, Haroyan, Ishkhanyan, A Hovhannisyan, Hovsepyan, Grigoryan (Malakyan 72), Barseghyan (Ozbiliz 65), Ghazaryan (Babayan 76), Adamyan, Karapetyan.

Oct15 - Athens
Greece 2 (Pavlidis 30, Kovacevic og 88)
Bosnia-Herzegovina 1 (Gojak 35)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 4,512. **Ref:** Zwayer (Ger)
Greece: Paschalakis - Bakakis, Hatzidiakos, Stafylidis, Giannoulis, Kourbelis, Galanopoulos, Limnios (Fetfatzidis 84), Bakasetas, Mantalos (Masouras 60), Pavlidis (Koulouris 70).
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Sehic - Kvrzic, Kovacevic, Bicakcic, Kolasinac, Cimirot (Jajalo 46), Pjanic, Saric (Duljevic 63), Hajrovic, Hodzic (Bajic 71), Gojak.

Oct15 - Vaduz
Liechtenstein 0
Italy 5 (Bernardeschi 2, Belotti 70, 90+2, Romagnoli 77, El Shaarawy 82)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 5,087. **Ref:** Treimanis (Lat)
Liechtenstein: B Buchel - Rechsteiner, Kaufmann, Hofer, Goppel, Martin Buchel, Yildiz (S Wolfinger 83), Polverino (N Frick 56), Hasler, Salanovic, Gubser (Y Frick 63).
Italy: Sirigu - Di Lorenzo, Mancini, Romagnoli, Biraghi (Bonucci 88), Zaniolo (El Shaarawy 63), Cristante, Verratti, Bernardeschi (Tonali 74), Belotti, Grifo.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Italy (QF)	8	8	0	0	25	3	24
Finland	8	5	0	3	12	8	15
Armenia	8	3	1	4	13	15	10
Bosnia-Herz	8	3	1	4	17	14	10
Greece	8	2	2	4	9	13	8
Liechtenstein	8	0	2	6	2	25	2

● *The top 2 in each of the10 groups will qualify for the 24-team Euro 2020 (European Championship) finals; the 4 remaining finals places will be taken by the winners of the 4 UEFA Nations League play-off finals (1 for each of the leagues, A, B, C & D)*

CONCACAF NATIONS LEAGUE

LEAGUE A

Group A

Oct11 - Washington DC
United States 7 (McKennie 1, 5, 13, Morris 9, Ramos og 37, Sargent 40, Pulisic pen 62)
Cuba 0
HT: 6-0. **Att:** 13,784. **Ref:** Torres (PR)
United States: Guzan - Cannon, Miazga, Ream, Lovitz, Roldan, Yueill, McKennie (Arriola 46), Morris (Boyd 46), Sargent, Pulisic (Lletget 68).
Cuba: Johnston - Cruz (Almelo 46), Ramos, Rizo, Morejon, Rodriguez, Hernandez, Espino, Abreu (Reve 60), Reyes, Paradela (Perez 83).

Oct15 - Toronto
Canada 2 (Davies 63, Cavallini 90+1)
United States 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 17,126. **Ref:** Parchment (Jam)
Canada: Borjan - Laryea, Vitoria, Cornelius, Miller, Kaye (Fraser 9), Piette, Arfield, Osorio, Davies (Hoilett 66), David (Cavallini 66).
United States: Steffen - Yedlin (Lima 73), Long, Ream, Lovitz, Roldan (Zardes 73), Bradley, Morris, McKennie, Pulisic (Arriola 60), Sargent.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Canada	3	3	0	0	9	0	9
United States	2	1	0	1	7	2	3
Cuba	3	0	0	3	0	14	0

Group B

Oct11 - Hamilton
Bermuda 1 (Wells 57)
Mexico 5 (Antuna 25, Macias 45+2, 53, Lozano 60, Herrera 71)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Bejarano (CR)
Bermuda: Eve - Brangman, Leverock, Bather, Harvey (Minors 46), Clemons (Bascome 59), Butterfield, Simmons, Lambe, Lewis (Donawa 77), Wells.
Mexico: Cota - Sanchez, Araujo, Salcedo, Calderon, C Rodriguez (J I Rodriguez 77), Herrera, Cordova (Aguirre 63), Antuna, Macias, Lozano (Lainez 72).

Oct15 - Mexico City
Mexico 3 (Alvarado 28, Macias 75, Pizarro 90+2)
Panama 1 (Salcedo og 42)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Barton (ESv)
Mexico: Gudino - Mozo, Araujo, Salcedo, Calderon, Aguirre (Cordova 62), Herrera, C Rodriguez, Alvarado (Antuna 89), Lozano (Macias 66), Pizarro.
Panama: Mejia - Palacios, Escobar, R Torres, Ariano (Stephens 80), Carrasquilla (Blackman 66), Botello (Ayarza 46), Rodriguez, Barcenas, G Torres, Godoy.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mexico	2	2	0	0	8	2	6
Panama	3	1	0	2	5	6	3
Bermuda	3	1	0	2	4	9	3

Group C

Oct10 - Port of Spain
Trinidad & Tobago 0
Honduras 2 (Moya 52, Martinez 90)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Escobar (Gtm)
Trinidad & Tobago: Phillip - A Jones, Bateau, Cyrus, M Williams, L Garcia, Hyland, Paul (Guerra 74), Telfer (Muckette 87), Carr (A Garcia 62), Molino. *Sent off: L Garcia 72, M Williams 90+1.*
Honduras: L Lopez - Crisanto, H Figueroa, M Figueroa, Alvarado, Elis, A Lopez (Alvarez 76), Pineda, Rubio, Moya (Martinez 82), Rochez (Rivas 68).

Oct13 - San Pedro Sula
Honduras 1 (Barthelery og 4)
Martinique 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Escobedo (Mex)
Honduras: L Lopez - Crisanto, Maldonado, M Figueroa, Izaguirre, Pineda, Alvarez (Acosta 75), Elis, Moya (Martinez 79), Rivas, Rochez (Rubio 46).
Martinique: Huygues Des Etages - Barthelery (Jougon 70), Delem, Cretinoir, Camille, Herelle, Abaul, Donisa (Vitulin 57), Fortune, Yann Thimon (Marajo 66), Biron.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Honduras (Q)	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Martinique	3	0	2	1	3	4	2
Trin & Tob	3	0	2	1	3	5	2

Group D

Oct10 - Nassau, Bahamas
Haiti 1 (Pierrot 82)
Costa Rica 1 (Ortiz 53)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Fischer (Can)
Haiti: Placide - Arcus, Lafrance, Geffrard, Christian (Etienne 76), Alceus, Mustivar, Desire (Nazon 60), Bazile, Guerrier, Pierrot.
Costa Rica: Navas - Blanco, Waston, Duarte, Oviedo, Campbell (Gonzalez 74), Borges, Allan Cruz, Leal (Lassiter 69), Moya (Flores 46), Ortiz.

Oct13 - Alajuela
Costa Rica 0
Curacao 0
Ref: Villarreal (USA)
Costa Rica: Navas - Blanco, Waston, Duarte, Matarrita, Venegas, Borges, Allan Cruz (Diaz 46), Lassiter (Campbell 64), Flores (Moya 73), Ortiz.
Curacao: Room - Gaari, Shermar Martina, L Bacuna, Nepomuceno, Kuwas (Bonevacia 56), J Bacuna, De Nooijer, Hooi, Gorre (Van Kessel 75), Janga.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Curacao	3	1	2	0	2	1	5
Costa Rica	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
Haiti	3	0	2	1	2	3	2

● *The 4 group winners will qualify for the Nations League semi-finals; the bottom team in each group will be relegated to League B for the next edition of the tournament*

LEAGUE B

Group A

Oct10 - Belmopan
Belize 0
St Kitts & Nevis 4 (Sterling-James 12, Liburd pen 48, 56, 63)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Reyna (Gtm)

Oct10 - Cayenne
French Guiana 0
Grenada 0
Ref: Bassue (SKN)

Oct13 - St George's
Grenada 1 (J Charles 67)
French Guiana 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** B Lopez (Gtm)
Sent off: Modeste (Grenada) 60

Oct13 - Basseterre
St Kitts & Nevis 0
Belize 1 (Smith pen 3)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Herrera (ESv)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Grenada	4	3	1	0	5	2	10
French Guiana	4	1	2	1	5	3	5
St Kitts & Nevis	4	1	1	2	7	5	4
Belize	4	1	0	3	2	9	3

Group B

Oct12 - Santo Domingo
Dominican Republic 3 (Lopez 34, Romero 52, Gonzalez 85)
St Lucia 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Sandoval (Nic)

Oct12 - Lookout
Montserrat 0
El Salvador 2 (Dominguez 43, Zelaya 78)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Calderon (CR)

Oct15 - Santo Domingo
Dominican Republic 0
Montserrat 0
Ref: Castro (Hnd)

Oct15 - Gros Islet
St Lucia 0
El Salvador 2 (Zelaya 68, Portillo 88)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Lezama (Nic)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
El Salvador	4	3	0	1	7	1	9
Dominican Rep	4	2	1	1	5	2	7
Montserrat	4	1	2	1	3	4	5
St Lucia	4	0	1	3	1	9	1

Group C

Oct11 - North Sound
Antigua & Barbuda 2 (Griffith 15, Benjamin 17)
Guyana 1 (Welshman 50)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Herrera (CR)
Sent off: K Marsh-Brown (Guyana) 90

Oct12 - Kingston
Jamaica 2 (Williams 13, Nicholson 88)
Aruba 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Perez (Mex)

Oct14 - Leonora
Guyana 5 (Bobb 1, 28, Holder 65, Daniel 77, Schultz 90+3)
Antigua & Barbuda 1 (Bishop 48)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Anderson (PR)

Oct15 - Willemstad, Curacao
Aruba 0
Jamaica 6 (Willis pen 7, Foster 17, 53, Walker 19, Nicholson 34, Flemmings 47)
HT: 0-4. **Ref:** Montero (CR)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jamaica	4	4	0	0	18	0	12
Guyana	4	2	0	2	7	7	6
Antigua & B	4	2	0	2	5	13	6
Aruba	4	0	0	4	1	11	0

Group D

Oct11 - Managua
Nicaragua 3 (Chavarria 7, 41, Rayo 90+1)
Dominica 1 (Wade 90+3)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Salgado (Hnd)

Oct11 - Arnos Vale
St Vincent & The Grenadines 2 (Stewart 58, pen 90+5)
Surinam 2 (G Vlijter 26, 53)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** W Lopez (Gtm)

Oct14 - Roseau
Dominica 0
Nicaragua 4 (Chavarria 42, Bonilla 71, pen 84, Mendieta 90+2)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Ward (SKN)
Sent off: Anthony (Dominica) 63

Oct14 - Paramaribo
Surinam 0
St Vincent & The Grenadines 1 (Stewart 68)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Vergara (Pan)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
St Vincent & G	4	2	2	0	5	3	8
Surinam	4	2	1	1	10	4	7
Nicaragua	4	2	1	1	8	8	7
Dominica (R)	4	0	0	4	2	10	0

● *The 4 group winners will be promoted to League A for the next edition of the tournament; the bottom team in each group will be relegated to League C*

LEAGUE C

Group A

Oct12 - Bridgetown
Barbados 1 (Blackman 55)
US Virgin Islands 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Pineda (CR)

Oct12 - The Valley, Anguilla
Saint-Martin 3 (Bellechasse 64, 71, 75)
Cayman Islands 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Nation (Jam)

Oct15 - George Town
Cayman Islands 1 (J Ebanks pen 75)
Saint-Martin 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Hernandez (Mex)
Sent off: Dalmat (Saint-Martin) 82

Oct15 - Upper Bethlehem
US Virgin Islands 0
Barbados 4 (Leacock 17, Jules 77, Lashley 80, Phillips 90)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Encarnacion (DoR)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barbados	4	3	0	1	11	3	9
Cayman Is	4	3	0	1	6	5	9
Saint-Martin	4	1	0	3	4	7	3
US Virgin Is	4	1	0	3	2	8	3

Group B

Oct10 - Basseterre, St Kitts & Nevis
British Virgin Islands 0
Bahamas 4 (St Fleur pen 37, 49, Hall 55, Carey 81)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Richards (SKN)

Oct13 - Basseterre, St Kitts & Nevis
British Virgin Islands 3 (Rowe 45+3, Forbes 65, Wiltshire 84)
Bonaire 4 (Cicilia pen 25, R Janga 88, Medway og 90+3, Koffy 90+5)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Gaymes (SVG)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bahamas	2	2	0	0	6	1	6
Bonaire	3	2	0	1	9	7	6
British Virgin Is	3	0	0	3	5	12	0

Group C

Oct12 - The Valley
Anguilla 0
Guatemala 5 (Guerra 4, Santeliz 18, Ceballos pen 61, Perez 72, Pineda 90+2)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Radix (Gre)

Oct15 - The Valley
Anguilla 2 (Lake-Bryan 76, Morgan 89)
Puerto Rico 3 (Ferrer 39, Padron 44, Diaz 54)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** De Leca (Aru)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guatemala	3	3	0	0	20	0	9
Puerto Rico	2	1	0	1	3	7	3
Anguilla	3	0	0	3	2	18	0

Group D

Oct10 - Willemstad, Curacao
Sint Maarten 2 (Lake 9, pen 36)
Turks & Caicos Islands 5 (Forbes 18, 45+1, pen 87, Beljour 59, Magny 62)
HT: 2-2. **Ref:** Cornejo (ESv)

Oct14 - Willemstad, Curacao
Sint Maarten 1 (Lake pen 75)
Guadeloupe 2 (Mirval pen 10, 35)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Kellys (Pan)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guadeloupe	3	3	0	0	10	2	9
Turks & Caicos	2	1	0	1	5	5	3
Sint Maarten	3	0	0	3	4	12	0

● *The 4 group winners will be promoted to League B for the next edition of the tournament*

2021 AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS QUALS

Preliminary round

1st legs

Oct 9 - Djibouti
Djibouti 1 (Mbye og 59)
Gambia 1 (Sanneh 90)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** El Din (Egy)

Oct 9 - Paynesville
Liberia 1 (Sherman 43)
Chad 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Dos Santos (GuB)

Oct 9 - Belle Vue Maurel
Mauritius 1 (Perticots 40)
Sao Tome e Principe 3 (Luis Leal 45, 60, Ze 65)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Tsimanohitsy (Mad)

Oct 9 - Omdurman, Sudan
South Sudan 2 (Kerjok 20, Nyuar 44)
Seychelles 1 (Hoareau 13)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Mwandembwa (Tan)

2nd legs

Oct13 - N'Djamena
Chad 1 (N'Douassel 54)
Liberia 0
HT: 0-0
Sent off:Johnson (Liberia) 53
Agg1-1, Chad 5-4 on pens

Oct13 - Bakau
Gambia 1 (Jallow 45+3)
Djibouti 1 (Mahabeh pen 10)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Keita (Mli)
Agg 2-2, Gambia 3-2 on pens

Oct13 - Sao Tome
Sao Tome e Principe 2 (Barbeiro 11, Luis Leal 27)
Mauritius 1 (Nazira pen 45)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Dongombe (CAR)
Sao Tome e Principe 5-2 on agg

Oct13 - Victoria
Seychelles 0
South Sudan 1 (Nyuar 72)
HT: 0-0
South Sudan 3-1 on agg

FRIENDLIES

Sunday, September 29

Sep 29 - Dhaka
Bangladesh 4 (Jibon 11, 39, Ahmed 74, Rabiul Hasan 81)
Bhutan 1 (Dorji 51)
HT: 2-0

Monday, September 30

Sep 30 - Gaborone
Botswana 0
Liberia 0

Wednesday, October 2

Oct 2 - Toluca
Mexico 2 (Macias 23, J R Angulo 31)
Trinidad & Tobago 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Vergara (Pan)
Mexico: Gudino - Mozo, Govea, J A Angulo (J Gonzalez 63), Calderon (Arteaga 46), Aguirre, J I Rodriguez, Cordova (Venegas 75), Yrizar (Vasquez 63), Macias (Godinez 75), J R Angulo (Torres 46).
Trinidad & Tobago: Phillip - Andrews, Mitchell, Cyrus, Russell, James (Gonzales 79), C Thomas (Kerr 46; J Garcia 75), Paul, Muckette, Lewis (Lester 46), Perry (I Garcia 65).

Thursday, October 3

Oct 3 - Dhaka
Bangladesh 2 (Yeasin Khan 23, 66)
Bhutan 0
HT: 1-0

Friday, October 4

Oct 4 - Gros Islet
St Lucia 3 (Frederick, St Prix, Charles)
Dominica 1 (Thomas)

Saturday, October 5

Oct 5 - Amman
Jordan 0
Singapore 0

Oct 5 - Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia 6 (Syafiq 9, 76, 89, Shahrul 14, Norshahrul 17, Akhyar 51)
Sri Lanka 0
HT: 3-0

Sunday, October 6

Oct 6 - Mabouya Valley
St Lucia 1
Dominica 4 (Thomas, Wade, E Bertrand, C Bertrand)

Wednesday, October 9

Oct 9 - Manama
Bahrain 2 (Al Malood 31, Al Shaikh 68)
Azerbaijan 3 (Rufat Dadashov 41, Khalilzade 62, Sheydayev 70)
HT: 1-1

Oct 9 - Dortmund
Germany 2 (Gnabry 15, Havertz 22)
Argentina 2 (Alario 66, Ocampos 85)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 45,197. **Ref:** Turpin (Fra)
Germany: Ter Stegen - Can, Koch, Sule, Klostermann, Havertz (Rudy 83), Kimmich, Halstenberg, Brandt (Amiri 66), Gnabry (Serdar 72), Waldschmidt.
Argentina: Marchesin - Foyth, Otamendi, Rojo (Acuna 46), Tagliafico, Pereyra (Saravia 76), De Paul (Rodriguez 90+2), Paredes, Correa (Ocampos 46), Dybala (Alario 62), Lautaro Martinez.

Thursday, October 10

Oct10 - Blida
Algeria 1 (Slimani 5)
DR Congo 1 (Bakambu 25)
HT: 1-1
Algeria: Doukha (Oukidja 46) - Hassani (Atal 70), Tahrat, Abdellaoui (Chetti 83), Bensebaini, Guedioura, Bennacer, Ferhat (Mahrez 66), Benrahma (Boudaoui 62), Slimani, Brahimi (Belaili 74).
DR Congo: Mandanda - Botaka, Dongo, Mbemba, Masuaku, M'Poku (Kayembe 90), Moke, Kakuta (Akolo 57), Kebano (Muleka 72), Bakambu, Bolasie (Moutoussamy 66).

Oct10 - Singapore
Brazil 1 (Roberto Firmino 9)
Senegal 1 (Diedhiou pen 45+1)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Bin Jahari (Sin)
Brazil: Ederson - Daniel Alves, Marquinhos, Thiago Silva, Alex Sandro (Renan Lodi 79), Arthur (Matheus Henrique 68), Casemiro, Philippe Coutinho (Richarlison 72), Gabriel Jesus, Roberto Firmino (Everton 59), Neymar.
Senegal: Gomis - Gassama, Sane, Koulibaly, Coly, Kouyate (S Sarr 66), I Sarr (Thioub 90+3), Diatta, Gueye (B N'Diaye 79), Mane, Diedhiou (H Diallo 78).

Oct10 - Saint-Leu-la-Foret, France
Burkina Faso 0
Gabon 1 (Aubameyang pen 86)
HT: 0-0

Oct10 - Pristina
Kosovo 1 (Hasani 69)
Gibraltar 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Xhaja (Alb)
Kosovo: Ujkani - Hadergjonaj, Dresevic, Xhemajli, Kololli (Paqarada 46), V Berisha (Voca 63), Rashkaj, Zhegrova (Kastrati 46), Muslija (Hasani 46), B Berisha (Rashani 46), Nuhiu.
Gibraltar: Goldwin (Coleing 46; Cafer 77) - Sergeant, Mouelhi (Jolley 75), Olivero, J Chipolina, Britto (Pons 58), Badr, Casciaro (Andrew Hernandez 58), R Chipolina, Anthony Hernandez, De Barr (Coombes 58).

Oct10 - Krusevac
Serbia 1 (A Mitrovic 90)
Paraguay 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 3,859. **Ref:** Kajtazovic (Sln)
Serbia: Rajkovic (Rockov 89) - Miletic (Gobeljic 46), S Mitrovic, Kolarov (Milunovic 67), Mladenovic (Rodic 66), Milivojevic (Lukic 46), Maksimovic (Gudelj 66), Radonjic, Ljajic, Gacinovic, A Mitrovic.
Paraguay: Fernandez - Robert Rojas, Gomez, Alonso, Riveros, Paredes (Espinoza 59), Morel, Villasanti, Almiron, D Gonzalez (Sanchez 84), Sanabria (Lezcano 71). *Sent off: Almiron 54.*

Oct10 - Bangkok
Thailand 1 (Teerasil 34)
Congo 1 (Makouta 59)
HT: 1-0

Oct10 - Fos-sur-Mer, France
Togo 1 (Bebou 20)
Cape Verde Islands 2 (Ze Luis pen 47, Vagner 65)
HT: 1-0

Oct10 - Caracas
Venezuela 4 (Herrera 38, Machis 41, Rondon 50, pen 87)
Bolivia 1 (Alvarez 55)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 20,112. **Ref:** Murillo (Col)
Venezuela: Farinez - Hernandez, Chancellor, Angel, Rosales (Feltscher 78), Herrera (Moreno 88), Otero (J Anor 68), Rincon, Machis (Soteldo 56), Savarino (Murillo 78), Rondon (Aristeguieta 88).
Bolivia: Arauz - O Ribera, Jusino, G Justiniano, Sagredo, Sanchez (Melgar 59; Anez 74), Arano (Algaranaz 77), L Justiniano, Arce (Castellon 59), Saavedra (L Vaca 70), Alvarez (Saucedo 68).

Friday, October 11

Oct11 - Oujda
Morocco 1 (El Yamiq 20)
Libya 1 (Al Warfali 42)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Ngambo (DRC)

Oct11 - Montevideo
Uruguay 1 (B Rodriguez 17)
Peru 0
HT: 1-0
Uruguay: Muslera - Caceres, Gimenez, Godin, Vina (Laxalt 79), Torreira, B Rodriguez (Nandez 62), Vecino (Bentancur 67), Valverde, Lozano (J Rodriguez 75), Gomez.
Peru: Gallese - Advincula, Zambrano (Santamaria 69), Abram, Trauco, Tapia, Gonzales, Costa (Cueva 58), Ballon (Reyna 63), Carrillo (Hohberg 78), Guerrero.

Saturday, October 12

Oct12 - Alicante, Spain
Colombia 0
Chile 0
Ref: Barcelo (Gib)
Colombia: Ospina - Medina, D Sanchez, Mina, Tesillo, Cuadrado, Barrios, Moreno, Muriel (Diaz 75), D Zapata (Morelos 23), Martinez (Lerma 61).
Chile: Claudio Bravo - Diaz, Medel (Vegas 21), Maripan, Isla, Vidal (Pavez 90+3), Pulgar, Parot (Opazo 53), Pinares (Baeza 70), Orellana (Rubio 58), Sanchez (Mora 88).

Oct12 - Versailles, France
Guinea 0
Comoros 1 (Ben Nabouhane 67)
HT: 0-0

Oct12 - Rades
Tunisia 0
Cameroon 0
Att: 2,500. **Ref:** Boukhalfa (Alg)
Tunisia: Ben Mustapha - Kechrida, Bronn, Chaalali (Ben Mohamed 39), Maaloul, Skhiri, Meriah, Sliti (Rafia 89), Khaoui (Srarfi 78), Sassi, Khenissi (Layouni 75).
Cameroon: Ondoa - Fai (Nyom 46), Oyongo, Djoum, Onguene (Dawa 74), Kunde, Ngadeu (Moukoudi 66), Zambo Anguissa, Ganago (Ntep 46), Bassogog (Fuchs 87), Toko Ekambi (Salli 77).

Sunday, October 13

Oct13 - Porto-Novo
Benin 2 (Mounie 43, Adeoti 90+1)
Zambia 2 (Shonga 21, 79)
HT: 1-1

Oct13 - Singapore
Brazil 1 (Casemiro 48)
Nigeria 1 (Aribo 35)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Foo (Sin)
Brazil: Ederson - Daniel Alves, Marquinhos, Thiago Silva, Renan Lodi, Gabriel Jesus (Lucas Paqueta 88), Casemiro, Arthur (Fabinho 80), Everton (Richarlison 46), Roberto Firmino (Gabriel Barbosa 62), Neymar (Philippe Coutinho 12).
Nigeria: Uzoho (Okoye 63) - Awaziem, Troost-Ekong, Ajayi, Collins, Aribo (Shehu 90+4), Ndidi, Chukwueze (Olayinka 89), Iwobi (Azeez 84), Simon (Dennis 79), Osimhen (Onuachu 74).

Oct13 - Elche, Spain
Ecuador 1 (Mena 49)
Argentina 6 (Alario 20, Espinoza og 27, Paredes pen 32, Pezzella 66, Dominguez 82, Ocampos 86)
HT: 0-3. **Ref:** Barbeno (SaM)
Ecuador: Ortiz - Espinoza (Lopez 46), Aimar, Arreaga, Estupinan (Palacios 65), Mendez, Plata (Alvarado 65), Cifuentes (Quinonez 46), Sornoza (E Valencia 46), Castillo (Mena 46), Estrada.

Argentina: Marchesin - Foyth (Saravia 77), Pezzella (Balerdi 82), Kannemann, Acuna, Gonzalez (Vargas 70), De Paul, Paredes (Rodriguez 46), Ocampos, Alario (Dominguez 57), Lautaro Martinez (Dybala 46).

Oct13 - Bahir Dar
Ethiopia 0
Uganda 1 (Okwi 20)
HT: 0-1

Oct13 - Amiens, France
Ivory Coast 3 (Kanon 22, Pepe 44, Zaha 90+5)
DR Congo 1 (Akolo 64)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 1,500. **Ref:** Millot (Fra)
Ivory Coast: Gbohouo (B Sangare 46) - Aurier, Traore, Kanon, Konan, Kessie, Maiga (I Sangare 84), Fofana, Zaha, Gradel (Meite 87), Pepe (Kouame 90+2).
DR Congo: Mandanda (Mossi 46) - Botaka, Dongo, Mbemba (Mondeko 84), Masuaku, M'Poku, Moutoussamy, Kakuta (Kebano 46), Muleka (Bolasie 46), Akolo, Bakambu.

Oct13 - Nairobi
Kenya 0
Mozambique 1 (Canhembe 71)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Mpaima (Ken)

Oct13 - Bratislava
Slovakia 1 (Bozenik 59)
Paraguay 1 (Alejandro Romero Gamarra 85)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 6,669. **Ref:** Vincic (Sln)
Slovakia: Greif - Satka, Skrtel (Vavro 31), Valjent, Mazan (Hubocan 87), Gregus (Bozenik 46), Hrosovsky (Hamsik 71), Duda (Benes 46), Duris, Nemec (Bero 31), Haraslin.
Paraguay: Fernandez - I Piris, Gomez, Alonso, Riveros (Espinoza 82), Sanchez (Paredes 77), Villasanti (Alejandro Romero Gamarra 61), Morel, Angel Romero (D Gonzalez 68), Lezcano (Sanabria 90), Samudio (O Romero 61).

Oct13 - Port Elizabeth
South Africa 2 (Furman pen 23, Zwane 45+1)
Mali 1 (Koita 74)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 18,017. **Ref:** Mokete (Les)
South Africa: Williams (Keet 46) - Mathoho, Maela, Mokotjo (Mokeke 64), Hlatshwayo, Furman, Morena, Lorch (Lebusa 71), Dolly (Zwane 40), Serero (Phiri 63), Grobler (Erasmus 76).
Mali: D Diarra - Wague, Fofana, Kouyate, C Traore, L Coulibaly, A Haidara (Camra 90+3), Doucoure (Camara 64), Adama Traore/F, H Sacko (Tandia 74), Koita.

Oct13 - Mallemort, France
Togo 1 (Atchou 50)
Equatorial Guinea 1 (Ganet 2)
HT: 0-1

Monday, October 14
Oct14 - Prague
Czech Republic 2 (Darida 67, Kral 68)
Northern Ireland 3 (McNair 9, 40, J Evans 23)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 9,139. **Ref:** Kruzliak (Slk)
Czech Republic: Pavlenka - Reznik, Simic (Celustka 46), Kudela, Krejci (Masopust 75), Zmrhal (Boril 46), Kral, Kalvach (Darida 46), Husbauer (Schick 65), Kopic, Krmencik (Ondrasek 46).
Northern Ireland: McGovern - Cathcart, J Evans, Flanagan, McLaughlin, McNair, Davis (C Evans 64), Thompson (Saville 64), Dallas, Boyce (Magennis 71), Whyte (McGinn 87).

Oct14 - Borg El Arab
Egypt 1 (H Fathy 74)
Botswana 0
HT: 0-0

Oct14 - Kigali
Rwanda 0
Tanzania 0
Att: 7,000. **Ref:** Omweno (Ken)

Oct14 - Caracas
Venezuela 2 (Rondon 11, Machis 14)
Trinidad & Tobago 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 12,625. **Ref:** Murillo (Col)
Venezuela: Farinez (Romo 46) - Hernandez (Benitez 46), Osorio, Villanueva, Feltscher, Rincon, Moreno, Murillo (Savarino 74), Otero (J Anor 66), Machis (Soteldo 46), Rondon (Ponce 78).
Trinidad & Tobago: Foncette - A Jones, Bateau, David, Julien, Andrews (Russell 80), Hackshaw, George, L Garcia (A Garcia 65), Joseph (Fortune 74), Guerra (Carr 82).

Tuesday, October 15
Oct15 - Lille, France
Algeria 3 (Bounedjah 15, Mahrez 20, 65)
Colombia 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Buquet (Fra)
Algeria: M'Bolhi - Atal, Mandi, Benlamri, Bensebaini (Abdellaoui 90+1), Guedioura, Bennacer, Mahrez (Abeid 85), Feghouli, Belaili (Brahimi 77), Bounedjah (Slimani 72).
Colombia: Ospina - Orejuela, D Sanchez, O Murillo, Mojica, Uribe (Barrios 70), Lerma, Moreno (Sinisterra 46), Cuadrado (Diaz 46), Morelos (Ibarguen 70), Muriel (Martinez 46).

Oct15 - Hamilton
Bermuda 0
Guatemala 0
Att: 1,105. **Ref:** Unkel (USA)

Oct15 - Santa Cruz de la Sierra
Bolivia 3 (Saavedra 27, 37, Alvarez 56)
Haiti 1 (Alvarez og 22)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Mendez (Bol)
Bolivia: Quinonez - O Ribera, Jusino, G Justiniano, Sagredo, Saavedra (Anez 65), Arano (Sanchez 58), L Justiniano (Algaranaz 90+4), Arce (L Vaca 89), Saucedo (Hoyos 70), Alvarez (Castellon 58).
Haiti: Placide - Alexis, Jean-Baptiste, Lafrance, Christian, Mustivar (Alceus 73), Bazile, Herivaux, Etienne (Guerrier 73), Pierrot (Desire 73), Nazon.

Oct15 - Alicante, Spain
Chile 3 (Meneses 64, Mora 71, Vidal pen 74)
Guinea 2 (I Conte 38, I Camara 80)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 150. **Ref:** Zammit (Mlt)
Chile: Claudio Bravo - Isla (Opazo 46), Sierralta, Maripan, Parot (Albornoz 46), Vidal, Pulgar (Pavez 65), Christian Bravo (Rubio 65), Pinares (Baeza 75), Meneses (Vegas 65), Mora.
Guinea: A Keita - Conde, Jeanvier, Falette, Issiaga Sylla, Mara, I Camara, Pogba, Konate (Soumah 77), D Camara (M Yattara 81), I Conte (Kaba 68).

Oct15 - Aalborg
Denmark 4 (Braithwaite 13, Dolberg 22, 60, Gytkjaer 67)
Luxembourg 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 9,043. **Ref:** Pandzic (Swe)
Denmark: Schmeichel - Dalsgaard (Knudsen 67), Kjaer (J Andersen 83), M Jorgensen, Ankersen, Hojbjerg, Wass, Skov, Eriksen (Lerager 46), Braithwaite (L Andersen 61), Dolberg (Gytkjaer 61).
Luxembourg: Moris (Schon 46) - M Martins (Bensi 74), Jans, Chanot, Gerson, Carlson, Sinani (Philipps 46), Barreiro (Bohnert 90), O Thill (Skenderovic 82), V Thill (Da Mota 55), Rodrigues.

Oct15 - Kuwait City
Kuwait 1 (Al Hubaiter 81)
Turkmenistan 1 (Amanov 70)
HT: 0-0

Oct15 - Nouakchott
Mauritania 0
Libya 0

Oct15 - Tangiers
Morocco 2 (N Amrabat 32, pen 69)
Gabon 3 (Boupendza 22, Bouanga 48, Chebake og 80)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 28,000. **Ref:** Sy (Sen)
Morocco: El Kajoui - Feddal, Hakimi, Mendyl (Chebake 46), El Yamiq, Taarabt, El Messaoudi (S Amrabat 46), Carcela (En-Nesyri 46), Bourabia (Fajr 74), N Amrabat (Idrissi 86), Alioui (Harit 80).
Gabon: Mfa Mezui - Appindangoye (Ecuele Manga 46), Musavu-King, Ebane, Palun, Biyogo Poko, Bulot (Biteghe 46), D Ndong, Boupendza (Allevinah 50), Aubameyang (Assoumou 90+3), Bouanga (Ameka 63).

Oct15 - Lima
Peru 1 (Gonzales 34)
Uruguay 1 (Nunez 80)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Herrera (Col)
Peru: Gallese - Advincula (Corzo 87), Zambrano, Abram, Trauco, Tapia (Reyna 83), Carrillo (Ascues 79), Cueva (Costa 71), Gonzales, Flores, Guerrero.
Uruguay: Campana - Caceres, Gimenez, Godin, Laxalt (Vina 46), Valverde, B Rodriguez (Nandez 63), Vecino, Bentancur (J Rodriguez 46), Lozano (Nunez 75), Gomez (Gonzalez 34).
Sent off: Caceres 26.

Club football

SOUTH AMERICA

SUDAMERICANA CUP

Semi-finals
1st legs - Sep18/19; 2nd legs - Sep 25/26
Colon (Arg) v Atletico Mineiro (Bra)
2-1, 1-2 (agg 3-3, Colon 4-3 on pens)
Corinthians (Bra) v Independiente del Valle (Ecu)
0-2, 2-2 (agg 2-4)

CONCACAF

CONCACAF LEAGUE

Quarter-finals
1st legs - Sep 24-26; 2nd legs - Oct1-3
Alianza (ESv) v San Carlos (CR) 2-0, 0-1 (agg 2-1); Olimpia (Hnd) v Comunicaciones (Gtm) 2-0, 0-0 (agg 2-0); Saprissa (CR) v Independiente (Pan) 3-2, 1-0 (agg 4-2); Waterhouse (Jam) v Motagua (Hnd) 0-2, 0-0 (agg 0-2)

CANADA

2019 Canadian Championship Final
1st leg - Sep18; 2nd leg - Sep 25
Montreal Impact v Toronto 1-0, 0-1
(agg 1-1, Montreal Impact 3-1 on pens)

EUROPE

ICELAND

2019 - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
KR (C)	22	16	4	2	44	23	52
Breidablik	22	11	5	6	45	31	38
FH	22	11	4	7	40	36	37
Stjarnan	22	9	8	5	40	34	35
KA	22	9	4	9	34	34	31
Valur	22	8	5	9	38	34	29
Vikingur R	22	7	7	8	37	35	28
Fylkir	22	8	4	10	38	44	28
HK	22	7	6	9	29	29	27
IA	22	7	6	9	27	32	27
Grindavik (R)	22	3	11	8	17	28	20
IBV (R)	22	2	4	16	23	52	10

AFRICA

CONFEDERATION CUP

1st round
1st legs - Sep13-15; 2nd legs - Sep 27-29
Al Ittihad (Lby) v Hassania Agadir (Mor) 1-1, 0-0 (agg 1-1, Hassania on away goals); Al Khartoum (Sud) v DC Motema Pembe (DRC) 1-2, 2-1 (agg 3-3, Motema Pembe 3-1 on pens); AS Kigali (Rwa) v Proline (Uga) 1-1, 1-2 (agg 2-3); AS Pelican (Gab) v Enugu Rangers (Nga) 2-1, 1-3 (agg 3-4); Ashanti Gold (Gha) v RS Berkane (Mor) 3-2, 0-2 (agg 3-4); Azam (Tan) v Triangle United (Zim) 0-1, 0-1 (agg 0-2); Bandari (Ken) v Ben Guerdane (Tun) 2-0, 1-2 (agg 3-2); Bolton City (Mrs) v Zanaco (Zam) 1-2, 0-3 (agg 1-5); ESAE (Ben) v Salitas (BuF) 0-0, 0-0 (agg 0-0, ESAE 5-3 on pens); Malindi (Zan) v Al Masry (Egy) 1-4, 1-3 (agg 2-7); Maranatha (Tog) v Djoliba (Mli) 1-2, 1-1 (agg 2-3); Paradou AC (Alg) v CS Sfaxien (Tun) 3-1, 0-0 (agg 3-1); Pyramids (Egy) v CR Belouizdad (Alg) 1-1, 1-0 (agg 2-1); Santoba (Gui) v San Pedro (IvC) 0-0, 0-3 (agg 0-3); TS Galaxy (SAf) v CNaPS Sport (Mad) 1-0, 3-1 (agg 4-1); Young Buffaloes (Esw) v Bidvest Wits (SAf) 1-0, 0-3 (agg 1-3)

ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

2019 Championship Final
Sep 20: Shaheen Asmayee 0 Toofaan H 1 (aet).

KEY TO TABLES
(Q) = qualified for next stage; (QF) = qualified for finals; (C) = champions; (R) = relegated

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ESM XI
EUROPEAN SPORTS MEDIA

SEPTEMBER 2019

SEASON RANKINGS
Cumulative votes through the season

GOALKEEPERS

Marc-Andre TER STEGEN (Barcelona)	7
Samir HANDANOVIC (Internazionale)	3
Jan OBLAK (Atletico Madrid)	2
ADRIAN (Liverpool)	1

DEFENDERS

Trent ALEXANDER-ARNOLD (Liverpool)	5
Virgil VAN DIJK (Liverpool)	5
Diego GODIN (Internazionale)	4
Andrew ROBERTSON (Liverpool)	4
Ricardo PERREIRA (Leicester City)	3
Stefan DE VRIJ (Internazionale)	2
Salif SANE (Schalke)	2
Stevan SAVIC (Atletico Madrid)	2
Milan SKRINIAR (Internazionale)	2
Nicolas TAGLIAFICO (Ajax)	2
Kieran TRIPPIER (Atletico Madrid)	2
Leonardo BONUCCI (Juventus)	1
Aurelien CHEDJOU (Amiens)	1
Mats HUMMELS (Borussia Dortmund)	1
Joshua KIMMICH (Bayern Munich)	1
Robin KNOCHE (Wolfsburg)	1
Aleksandar KOLAROV (Roma)	1
Ibrahima KONATE (RB Leipzig)	1
Kalidou KOULIBALY (Napoli)	1
Renan LODI (Atletico Madrid)	1
Joel MATIP (Liverpool)	1
Willi ORBAN (RB Leipzig)	1
Benjamin PAVARD (Bayern Munich)	1
PEPE (Porto)	1
Gerard PIQUE (Barcelona)	1
Thiago SILVA (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Caglar SOYUNCU (Leicester City)	1
Raphael VARANE (Real Madrid)	1
Kyle WALKER (Manchester City)	1

MIDFIELDERS

Kevin DE BRUYNE (Manchester City)	9
Stefano SENSI (Internazionale)	6
Angel DI MARIA (Paris Saint-Germain)	3
Marcelo BROZOVIC (Internazionale)	2
Philippe COUTINHO (Bayern Munich)	2
Amine HARIT (Schalke)	2
Wilfred NDIDI (Leicester City)	2
Martin ODEGAARD (Real Sociedad)	2
Georginio WIJNALDUM (Liverpool)	2
ARTHUR (Barcelona)	1
Santi CAZORLA (Villarreal)	1
Frenkie DE JONG (Barcelona)	1
FELIPE ANDERSON (West Ham United)	1
Alexander GOLOVIN (Monaco)	1
N'Golo KANTE (Chelsea)	1
Miralem PJANIC (Juventus)	1
Franck RIBERY (Fiorentina)	1
Bernardo SILVA (Manchester City)	1
Dusan TADIC (Ajax)	1
Youri TIELEMANS (Leicester City)	1
Hans VANAKEN (Club Brugge)	1

FORWARDS

Robert LEWANDOWSKI (Bayern Munich)	12
Donyell MALEN (PSV)	4
NEYMAR (Paris Saint-Germain)	4
Cristiano RONALDO (Juventus)	3
Karim BENZEMA (Real Madrid)	2
Erling HALAND (RB Salzburg)	2
Dries MERTENS (Napoli)	2
ROBERTO FIRMINO (Liverpool)	2
Islam SLIMANI (Monaco)	2
Sergio AGUERO (Manchester City)	1
Ansu FATI (Barcelona)	1
Lionel MESSI (Barcelona)	1
Teemu PUKKI (Norwich City)	1
Jadon SANCHO (Borussia Dortmund)	1

HOW IT WORKS Every month, journalists from each member of the European Sports Media group select their first XI based on the best individual performances from Europe's top competitions. For details of how each ESM member voted, visit worldsoccer.com/esm11

FRANCE: LIGUE 1 2019-20

AMIENS

GOALKEEPERS
16 Matthieu **DREYER** (30) 20.03.89
30 Boris **ESSELE** (Cam) (19) 25.01.00
1 Regis **GURTNER** (32) 08.12.86

DEFENDERS
14 Haitam **ALEESAMI** (Nor) (28) 31.07.91
24 Mathieu **BODMER** (36) 22.11.82
3 Arturo **CALABRESI** (Ita) (23) 17.03.96
27 Aurelien **CHEDJOU** (Cam) (34) 20.06.85
12 Bakaye **DIBASSY** (Mli) (30) 11.08.89
35 Valentin **GENDREY** (19) 21.06.00
2 Prince-Desir **GOUANO** (25) 24.12.93
13 Christophe **JALLET** (36) 31.10.83
25 Jordan **LEFORT** (26) 09.08.93
18 Sanasi **SY** (20) 04.04.99

MIDFIELDERS
19 Chadrac **AKOLO** (DRC) (24) 01.04.95
17 Alexis **BLIN** (23) 16.09.96
39 Jonathan **BUMBU** (20) 11.02.99
31 Unit **DEMIREL** (21) 12.09.98
38 Ulrick **ENEME ELLA** (18) 22.05.01
5 Eddy **GNAHORE** (25) 14.11.93
10 Gael **KAKUTA** (DRC) (28) 21.06.91
21 Rafal **KURZAWA** (Pol) (26) 29.01.93
6 Thomas **MONCONDUIT** (28) 10.02.91
11 Juan Ferney **OTERO** (Col) (24) 26.05.95
36 Jayson **PAPEAU** (23) 30.06.96
22 Madih **TALAL** (22) 17.08.97
8 Bongani **ZUNGU** (SAf) (27) 09.10.92

FORWARDS
29 Quentin **CORNETTE** (25) 17.01.94
28 Fousseni **DIABATE** (Mli) (24) 18.10.95
7 Saman **GHODDOS** (Irn) (26) 06.09.93
9 Serhou **GUIRASSY** (23) 12.03.96
15 Moussa **KONATE** (Sen) (26) 03.04.93
23 Jack **LAHNE** (Swe) (18) 24.10.01
- Stiven **MENDOZA** (Col) (27) 27.06.92
32 Darell **TOKPA** (18) 02.06.01

COACH
Luka **ELSNER** (Sln) (37) 02.08.82

ANGERS

GOALKEEPERS
16 Ludovic **BUTELLE** (36) 03.04.83
40 Anthony **MANDREA** (22) 25.12.96
30 Danijel **PETKOVIC** (Mne) (26) 25.05.93

DEFENDERS
2 Rayan **AIT-NOURI** (Alg) (18) 06.06.01
25 Abdoulaye **BAMBA** (IvC) (29) 25.04.90
3 Ibrahim **CISSE** (23) 02.05.96
13 Haithem **LOUCIF** (Alg) (23) 08.07.96
29 Vincent **MANCEAU** (30) 10.07.89
4 Mateo **PAVLOVIC** (Cro) (29) 09.06.90
26 Theo **PELLENARD** (25) 04.03.94
24 Romain **THOMAS** (31) 12.06.88
8 Ismael **TRAORE** (IvC) (33) 18.08.86

MIDFIELDERS
23 Antonin **BOBICHON** (24) 14.09.95
15 Pierrick **CAPELLE** (32) 15.04.87
10 Angelo **FULGINI** (23) 20.08.96
14 Anthony **GOMEZ-MANCINI** (18) 06.04.01
5 Thomas **MANGANI** (32) 29.04.87
6 Vincent **PAJOT** (29) 19.08.90
27 Mathias **PEREIRA LAGE** (Por) (22) 30.11.96
18 Baptiste **SANTAMARIA** (24) 09.03.95

FORWARDS
7 Rachid **ALIOUI** (Mor) (27) 18.06.92
19 Stephane **BAHOKEN** (Cam) (27) 28.05.92
28 Farid **EL MELALI** (Alg) (22) 05.05.97
11 Wilfried **KANGA** (21) 21.02.98
21 Casimir **NINGA** (Chd) (26) 17.05.93
20 Sada **THIOUB** (Sen) (24) 01.06.95

COACH
Stephane **MOULIN** (52) 04.08.67

BORDEAUX

GOALKEEPERS
1 Benoit **COSTIL** (31) 03.07.87
16 Gaetan **POUSSIN** (19) 13.01.99
30 Davy **ROUYARD** (20) 17.08.99

DEFENDERS
41 Paul **BAYSSE** (31) 18.05.88
2 Raoul **BELLANOVA** (Ita) (19) 17.05.00
23 Loris **BENITO** (Swi) (27) 07.01.92
14 Vukasin **JOVANOVIC** (Ser) (22) 17.05.96
6 Laurent **KOSCIELNY** (33) 10.09.85
25 Enock **KWATENG** (22) 09.04.97
4 **MEXER** (Moz) (31) 08.09.88
5 **OTAVIO** (Bra) (24) 04.05.94
3 **PABLO** (Bra) (27) 21.06.91
29 Maxime **POUNDJE** (26) 16.08.92
20 Youssouf **SABALY** (25) 05.03.93

MIDFIELDERS
19 Yacine **ADLI** (19) 29.07.00
17 Youssef **AIT BENNASSER** (Mor) (23) 07.07.96
26 Toma **BASIC** (Cro) (21) 25.11.96
22 Yassine **BENRAHOU** (19) 24.01.99
42 Jonathan **CAFU** (Bra) (28) 10.07.91
34 David **CARDOSO** (Mcu)
24 Albert **LOTTIN** (18) 29.08.01
47 Younousse **SANKHARE** (Sen) (29) 10.09.89
8 Aurelien **TCHOUAMENI** (18) 27.01.00

FORWARDS
7 Jimmy **BRIAND** (33) 02.08.85
12 Nicolas **DE PREVILLE** (27) 08.01.91
18 **HWANG** Ui-jo (SKo) (27) 28.08.92
10 Samuel **KALU** (Nga) (21) 26.08.97
11 Francois **KAMANO** (Gui) (22) 01.05.96
9 Josh **MAJA** (Nga) (20) 27.12.98

COACH
Paulo **SOUSA** (Por) (49) 30.08.70

BREST

GOALKEEPERS
30 Julien **FABRI** (25) 05.02.94
1 Gautier **LARSONNEUR** (22) 23.02.97
16 Donovan **LEON** (26) 03.11.92

DEFENDERS
24 Ludovic **BAAL** (33) 24.05.86
17 Denys **BAIN** (26) 02.07.93
20 Gaetan **BELAUD** (33) 16.09.86
21 Jean-Charles **CASTELLETTO** (Cam) (24) 26.01.95
5 Brendan **CHARDONNET** (24) 22.12.94
2 Jean-Kevin **DUVERNE** (22) 12.07.97
12 David **KIKI** (Den) (25) 25.11.93
18 Romain **PERRAUD** (22) 22.09.97

MIDFIELDERS
23 Mathias **AUTRET** (28) 01.03.91
11 Christian **BATTOCCHIO** (Ita) (27) 10.02.92
7 Haris **BELKEBLA** (Alg) (25) 28.01.94
8 Yoann **COURT** (29) 14.01.90
6 Ibrahima **DIALLO** (20) 08.03.99
22 Julien **FAUSSURIER** (32) 14.01.87
25 Samuel **GRANDSIR** (23) 14.08.96
13 Paul **LASNE** (30) 16.01.89
27 Hugo **MAGNETTI** (21) 30.05.98
28 Hianga'a **MBOCK** (19) 28.12.99
19 Ferris **N'GOMA** (26) 15.06.93

FORWARDS
14 Irvin **CARDONA** (22) 08.08.97
10 Gaetan **CHARBONNIER** (30) 27.12.88
9 Kevin **MAYI** (26) 14.01.93
15 Alexandre **MENDY** (25) 20.03.94
29 Derick **OSEI** (21) 10.09.98

COACH
Olivier **DALL'OGLIO** (55) 16.05.64

DIJON

GOALKEEPERS
16 Alfred **GOMES** (Sen) (26) 05.09.93
30 Levi **NTUMBA** (18) 12.01.01
1 Runar Alex **RUNARSSON** (Ice) (24) 18.02.95

DEFENDERS
4 Nayef **AGUERD** (Mor) (23) 30.03.96
2 Mickael **ALPHONSE** (30) 12.07.89
6 Theo **BARBET** (18) 06.03.01
26 Fouad **CHAFIK** (Mor) (33) 16.10.86
5 Senou **COULIBALY** (25) 04.09.94
25 Bruno **ECULE MANGA** (Gab) (31) 16.07.88
24 Wesley **LAUTOA** (NwC) (32) 25.08.87
27 Hamza **MENDYL** (Mor) (22) 21.10.97
3 Ngonda **MUZINGA** (DRC) (24) 31.12.94

MIDFIELDERS
20 Romain **AMALFITANO** (30) 27.08.89
17 Mama **BALDE** (GuB) (23) 06.11.95
15 Florent **BALMONT** (39) 02.02.80
12 Enzo **LOIODICE** (18) 27.11.00
14 Jordan **MARIE** (28) 29.09.91
22 Didier **NDONG** (Gab) (25) 17.06.94
10 Matheus **PEREIRA** (Bra) (21) 25.02.98
7 Frederic **SAMMARITANO** (33) 23.03.86
8 Bryan **SOUMARE** (20) 11.02.99

FORWARDS
19 Jhonder **CADIZ** (Ven) (24) 29.07.95
21 Mounir **CHOUIAR** (20) 23.01.99
9 Stephy **MAVIDIDI** (Eng) (21) 31.05.98
31 Rayan **PHILIPPE** (19) 23.10.00
11 Julio **TAVARES** (CV) (30) 19.11.88

COACH
Stephane **JOBARD** (48) 22.02.71

LILLE

GOALKEEPERS
1 Leo **JARDIM** (Bra) (24) 20.03.95
16 Mike **MAIGNAN** (23) 03.07.95

DEFENDERS
3 Saad **AGOUZOUL** (Mor) (22) 10.08.97
29 Domagoj **BRADARIC** (Cro) (19) 10.12.99
17 Zeki **CELIK** (Tur) (21) 17.02.97
2 Tiago **DJALO** (Por) (19) 09.04.00
6 Jose **FONTE** (Por) (34) 22.12.83
4 **GABRIEL** (Bra) (20) 19.12.97
26 Jeremy **PIED** (29) 23.02.89
28 **REINILDO** (Moz) (25) 21.01.94
5 Adama **SOUMAORO** (26) 18.06.92

MIDFIELDERS
27 Benjamin **ANDRE** (29) 03.08.90
10 Jonathan **IKONE** (20) 02.05.98
20 Thiago **MAIA** (Bra) (21) 23.03.97
18 Renato **SANCHES** (Por) (22) 18.08.97
24 Boubakary **SOUMARE** (19) 27.02.99
8 **XEKA** (Por) (24) 10.11.94
12 Yusuf **YAZICI** (Tur) (22) 29.01.97
21 Arton **ZEKAJ** (Ser) (18) 16.04.00

FORWARDS
11 Luiz **ARAUJO** (Bra) (22) 02.06.96
14 Jonathan **BAMBA** (22) 26.03.96
- Cheikh **NIASSE** (Sen) (19) 19.01.00
7 Victor **OSIMHEN** (Nga) (20) 29.12.98
34 Abou **OUATTARA** (BuF) (19) 26.12.99
- Virgiliu **POSTOLACHI** (Rom) (19) 17.03.00
9 Loic **REMY** (31) 02.01.87
22 Timothy **WEAH** (USA) (19) 22.02.00

COACH
Christophe **GALTIER** (52) 28.08.66

LYON

GOALKEEPERS
1 Anthony **LOPES** (Por) (29) 01.10.90
16 Anthony **RACIOPPI** (Swi) (20) 31.12.98
30 Ciprian **TATARUSANU** (Rom) (33) 09.02.86

DEFENDERS
3 Joachim **ANDERSON** (Den) (23) 31.05.96
5 Jason **DENAYER** (Blg) (24) 28.06.95
- Heritier **DEYONGE** (Blg) (17) 09.01.02
14 Leo **DUBOIS** (25) 14.09.94
28 Youssouf **KONE** (Mli) (24) 05.07.95
20 Fernando **MARCAL** (Bra) (30) 19.02.89
6 **MARCELO** (Bra) (32) 20.05.87
4 **RAFAEL** (Bra) (29) 09.07.90
26 Oumar **SOLET** (19) 07.02.00
23 Kenny **TETE** (Hol) (24) 09.10.95
2 Mapou **YANGA-MBIWA** (30) 15.05.89

MIDFIELDERS
8 Houssem **AOUAR** (21) 30.06.98
25 Maxence **CAQUERET** (19) 15.02.00
22 **JEAN LUCAS** (Bra) (21) 22.06.98
12 Thiago **MENDES** (Bra) (27) 15.03.92
17 Jeff **REINE-ADELAIDE** (21) 17.01.98
7 Martin **TERRIER** (22) 04.03.97
29 Lucas **TOUSART** (22) 29.04.97

FORWARDS
27 Maxwel **CORNET** (IvC) (23) 27.09.96
9 Moussa **DEMBELE** (23) 12.07.96
11 Memphis **DEPAY** (Hol) (25) 13.02.94
35 Boubacar **FOFANA** (21) 07.09.98
19 Amine **GOUIRI** (19) 16.02.00
10 Bertrand **TRAORE** (BuF) (24) 06.09.95

COACH
Rudi **GARCIA** (55) 20.02.64

MARSEILLE

GOALKEEPERS
40 Ahmadou **DIA** (20) 13.10.99
30 Steve **MANDANDA** (34) 28.03.85
16 Yohann **PELE** (36) 04.11.82

DEFENDERS
31 Abdallah **ALI MOHAMED** (Com) (20) 11.04.99
3 **ALVARO** Gonzalez (Spa) (29) 08.01.90
18 Jordan **AMAVI** (25) 09.03.94
15 Duje **CALETA-CAR** (Cro) (23) 17.09.96
4 Boubacar **KAMARA** (19) 23.11.99
32 Lucas **PERRIN** (20) 19.11.98
2 Hiroki **SAKAI** (Jap) (29) 12.04.90
17 Bouna **SARR** (27) 31.01.92

MIDFIELDERS
36 Marley **AKE** (18) 05.01.01
29 Florian **CHABROLLE** (21) 07.04.98
24 Saif-Eddine **KHAOUI** (Tun) (24) 27.04.95
27 Maxime **LOPEZ** (21) 04.12.97
10 Dimitri **PAYET** (32) 29.03.87
34 Alexandre **PHLIPONEAU** (19) 26.01.00
7 Nemanja **RADONJIC** (Ser) (23) 15.02.96
21 Valentin **RONGIER** (25) 07.12.94
8 Morgan **SANSON** (25) 18.08.94
22 Gregory **SERTIC** (30) 05.08.89
12 Kevin **STROOTMAN** (Hol) (29) 13.02.90

FORWARDS
9 Dario **BENEDETTO** (Arg) (29) 17.05.90
28 Valere **GERMAIN** (29) 17.04.90
33 Isaac **LIHADJI** (17) 10.04.02
26 Florian **THAUVIN** (26) 26.01.93

COACH
Andre **VILLAS-BOAS** (Por) (42) 17.10.77

METZ

GOALKEEPERS
1 Paul **DELECROIX** (30) 14.10.88
30 Guillaume **DIETSCH** (18) 17.04.01
16 Alexandre **OUKIDJA** (Alg) (31) 19.07.88

DEFENDERS
21 John **BOYE** (Gha) (32) 23.04.87
28 Manuel **CABIT** (26) 03.06.93
18 Fabien **CENTONZE** (23) 16.01.96
17 Thomas **DELAINE** (27) 24.03.92
15 Aboubacar **LO** (Sen) (19) 02.01.00
13 Stoppila **SUNZU** (Zam) (30) 22.06.89
3 Matthieu **UDOL** (23) 20.03.96

MIDFIELDERS
5 Victorien **ANGBAN** (IvC) (23) 29.09.96
27 Farid **BOULAYA** (Alg) (26) 25.02.93
24 Renaud **COHADE** (35) 29.09.84
6 Mamadou **FOFANA** (Mli) (21) 21.01.98
10 Marvin **GAKPA** (26) 01.11.93
22 Sami **LAHSSAINI** Blg) (21) 18.09.98
19 Habib **MAIGA** (IvC) (23) 01.01.96
4 Kévin **N'DORAM** (23) 22.01.96
11 Opa **NGUETTE** (Sen) (25) 08.07.94
25 Adama **TRAORE II** (Mli) (24) 28.06.95
8 Boubacar **TRAORE** (Mli) (18) 20.08.01
26 Pape Ndiaga **YADE** (Sen) (19) 05.01.00

FORWARDS
9 Thierry **AMBROSE** (22) 28.03.97
20 Habib **DIALLO** (Sen) (24) 15.06.95
23 Amadou Dia **N'DIAYE** (Sen) (19) 02.01.00
7 Ibrahima **NIANE** (20) 11.03.99
12 Adama **TRAORE I** (Mli) (24) 05.06.95

COACH
Frederic **ANTONETTI** (58) 19.08.61

MONACO

GOALKEEPERS
16 Diego **BENAGLIO** (Swi) (36) 08.09.83
40 Benjamin **LECOMTE** (28) 26.04.91
1 Danijel **SUBASIC** (Cro) (35) 27.10.84
30 Seydou **SY** (Sen) (23) 12.12.95

DEFENDERS
12 Ruben **AGUILAR** (26) 26.04.93
32 Benoit **BADIASHILE** (18) 26.03.01
25 Kamil **GLIK** (Pol) (31) 03.02.88
39 Benjamin **HENRICHS** (Ger) (22) 23.02.97
5 **JEMERSON** (Bra) (27) 24.08.92
3 Guillermo **MARIPAN** (Chl) (25) 06.05.94
27 **NALDO** (Bra) (37) 10.09.82
23 Pierre-Daniel **N'GUINDA** (23) 18.06.96
18 Arthur **ZAGRE** (18) 04.10.01

MIDFIELDERS
6 Tiemoue **BAKAYOKO** (25) 17.08.94
2 Fode **BALLO-TOURE** (22) 03.01.97
26 Gabriel **BOSCHILIA** (Bra) (23) 05.03.96
4 Cesc **FABREGAS** (Spa) (32) 04.05.87
17 Aleksandr **GOLOVIN** (Rus) (23) 30.05.96
8 Adrien **SILVA** (Por) (30) 15.03.89
34 Moussa **SYLLA** (20) 25.11.99

FORWARDS
22 Jean-Kevin **AUGUSTIN** (22) 16.06.97
14 Keta **BALDE** (Sen) (24) 08.03.95
9 Wissam **BEN YEDDER** (29) 12.08.90
31 Gil **DIAS** (Por) (23) 28.09.96
13 Willem **GEUBBELS** (18) 16.08.01
10 Stevan **JOVETIC** (Mne) (29) 02.11.89
11 Gelson **MARTINS** (Por) (24) 11.05.95
7 Henry **ONYEKURU** (Nga) (22) 05.06.97
19 Pietro **PELLEGRI** (Ita) (18) 17.03.01
20 Islam **SLIMANI** (Alg) (31) 18.06.88

COACH
Leonardo **JARDIM** (Por) (45) 01.08.74

MONTPELLIER

GOALKEEPERS

16	Dimitry **BERTAUD**	(21) 06.06.98
30	Mathis **CARVALHO**	(20) 28.04.99
1	Geronimo **RULLI** (Arg)	(27) 20.05.92

DEFENDERS

3	Daniel **CONGRE**	(34) 05.04.85
31	Nicolas **COZZA**	(20) 08.01.99
4	Vitorino **HILTON** (Bra)	(42) 13.09.77
5	Pedro **MENDES** (Por)	(29) 01.10.90
8	Ambroise **OYONGO** (Cam)	(28) 22.06.91
22	Mathias **SUAREZ** (Uru)	(23) 24.06.96
2	Arnaud **SOUQUET**	(27) 12.02.92
27	Clement **VIDAL**	(19) 18.06.00

MIDFIELDERS

29	Amir **ADOUYEV**	(20) 11.05.99
13	Joris **CHOTARD**	(18) 24.09.01
20	Keagan **DOLLY** (SAf)	(26) 22.02.93
12	Jordan **FERRI**	(27) 12.03.92
21	Kylian **KAIBOUE**	(21) 20.08.98
14	Damien **LE TALLEC**	(29) 19.04.90
25	Florent **MOLLET**	(27) 19.11.91
26	Mihailo **RISTIC** (Ser)	(24) 31.10.95
6	Junior **SAMBIA**	(23) 07.09.96
11	Teji **SAVANIER**	(27) 22.12.91

FORWARDS

15	Bilal **BOUTOBBA**	(21) 29.08.98
19	Souleymane **CAMARA** (Sen)	(36) 22.12.82
9	Andy **DELORT**	(28) 09.10.91
10	Gaetan **LABORDE**	(25) 03.05.94
32	Petar **SKULETIC** (Ser)	(29) 29.06.90

COACH

Michel **DER ZAKARIAN** (Arm)	(56) 18.02.63

NANTES

GOALKEEPERS

1	Alban **LAFONT**	(20) 23.01.99
16	Alexandre **OLLIERO**	(23) 15.02.96
30	Denis **PETRIC** (Sln)	(31) 24.05.88

DEFENDERS

12	Dennis **APPIAH**	(27) 09.06.92
23	Thomas **BASILA**	(20) 30.04.99
2	**FABIO** Da Silva (Bra)	(29) 09.07.90
25	Josue **HOMAWOO**	(21) 12.11.97
29	Batista **MENDY**	(19) 12.01.00
3	Wesley **MOUSTACHE**	(20) 26.02.99
4	Nicolas **PALLOIS**	(32) 19.09.87
14	Charles **TRAORE** (Mli)	(27) 01.01.92
13	Molla **WAGUE** (Mli)	(28) 21.02.91

MIDFIELDERS

11	Mahdi **ABEID** (Alg)	(27) 06.08.92
32	Kader **BAMBA**	(25) 25.04.94
10	Cristian **BENAVENTE** (Per)	(25) 19.05.94
17	Ludovic **BLAS**	(21) 31.12.97
8	Marcus **COCO**	(23) 24.06.96
-	Abdoulaye **DABO**	(18) 04.03.01
20	Andrei **GIROTTO** (Bra)	(27) 17.02.92
5	Joris **KAYEMBE** (Blg)	(25) 08.08.94
21	Rene **KRHIN** (Sln)	(29) 21.05.90
26	Imran **LOUZA**	(20) 01.05.99
18	Samuel **MOUTOUSSAMY**	(23) 12.08.96
6	Roli **PEREIRA**	(22) 10.12.96
19	Abdoulaye **TOURE**	(25) 03.03.94

FORWARDS

7	Kalifa **COULIBALY** (Mli)	(28) 21.08.91
22	Bridge **NDILU**	(19) 21.07.00
27	Moses **SIMON** (Nga)	(24) 12.07.95
24	Elie **YOUAN**	(20) 07.04.99

COACH

Christian **GOURCUFF**	(64) 05.04.55

NICE

GOALKEEPERS

40	Walter **BENITEZ** (Arg)	(26) 19.03.93
30	Yoan **CARDINALE**	(25) 27.03.94
16	Yannis **CLEMENTIA**	(22) 05.07.97

DEFENDERS

20	Youcef **ATTAL** (Alg)	(23) 17.05.96
15	Patrick **BURNER**	(23) 11.04.96
34	Ibrahim **CISSE** (IvC)	(20) 11.01.99
12	Racine **COLY** (Sen)	(23) 08.12.95
4	**DANTE** (Bra)	(36) 18.10.83
29	Christophe **HERELLE**	(27) 22.08.92
3	Gautier **LLORIS**	(24) 18.07.95
2	Stanley **N'SOKI**	(20) 09.04.99
24	Andy **PELMARD**	(19) 12.03.00
23	Malang **SARR** (Sen)	(20) 23.01.99

MIDFIELDERS

28	Hichem **BOUDAOUI** (Alg)	(20) 23.09.99
18	Alexis **CLAUDE-MAURICE**	(21) 06.06.98
25	Wylan **CYPRIEN**	(24) 28.01.95
21	**DANILO** Barbosa (Bra)	(23) 28.02.96
8	Pierre **LEES-MELOU**	(26) 25.05.93
22	Arnaud **LUSAMBA**	(22) 04.01.97
10	Adam **OUNAS** (Alg)	(22) 11.11.96
11	Bassem **SRARFI** (Tun)	(22) 25.06.97
5	Adrien **TAMEZE**	(25) 04.02.94
19	Khephren **THURAM**	(18) 26.03.01
6	Remi **WALTER**	(24) 26.04.95

FORWARDS

9	Kasper **DOLBERG** (Den)	(22) 06.10.97
14	Ignatius **GANAGO** (Cam)	(20) 16.02.99
-	Evann **GUESSAND**	(18) 01.07.01
7	Myziane **MAOLIDA**	(20) 14.02.99

COACH

Patrick **VIEIRA**	(43) 23.06.76

NIMES

GOALKEEPERS

30	Paul **BERNARDONI**	(22) 18.04.97
16	Lucas **DIAS**	(20) 22.05.99

DEFENDERS

29	Sofiane **ALAKOUCH**	(21) 29.07.98
23	Anthony **BRIANCON**	(24) 28.11.94
19	Lucas **BUADES**	(21) 28.12.97
21	Keylan **GUESSOUM**	(20) 05.02.99
5	Loick **LANDRE**	(27) 05.05.92
4	Pablo **MARTINEZ**	(30) 21.02.89
26	Florian **MIGUEL**	(23) 01.09.96
15	Gaetan **PAQUIEZ**	(25) 15.02.94
3	Theo **SAINTE-LUCE**	(21) 20.10.98

MIDFIELDERS

8	Lucas **DEAUX**	(30) 26.12.88
10	Zinedine **FERHAT** (Alg)	(26) 01.03.93
12	Lamine **FOMBA**	(21) 26.01.98
7	Romain **PHILIPPOTEAUX**	(31) 02.03.88
6	Sidy **SARR** (Sen)	(23) 05.06.96
33	Antoine **VALERIO**	(19) 11.12.99
18	Theo **VALLS**	(23) 18.12.95

FORWARDS

24	Sami **BEN AMAR** (Mor)	(21) 02.03.98
27	Kevin **DENKEY**	(18) 30.11.00
9	Clement **DEPRES**	(24) 25.11.94
17	Haris **DULJEVIC** (Bos)	(25) 16.11.93
20	Renaud **RIPART**	(26) 14.03.93
11	Vlatko **STOJANOVSKI** (NMa)	(22) 23.04.97

COACH

Bernard **BLAQUART**	(62) 16.08.57

PSG

GOALKEEPERS

30	Marcin **BULKA** (Pol)	(20) 04.10.99
40	Garissone **INNOCENT**	(19) 16.04.00
1	Keylor **NAVAS** (CR)	(32) 15.12.86
16	Sergio **RICO** (Spa)	(26) 01.09.93

DEFENDERS

25	Mitchel **BAKKER** (Hol)	(19) 20.06.00
14	Juan **BERNAT** (Spa)	(26) 01.03.93
31	Colin **DAGBA**	(21) 09.09.98
22	Abdou **DIALLO**	(23) 04.05.96
4	Thilo **KEHRER** (Ger)	(23) 21.09.96
3	Presnel **KIMPEMBE**	(24) 13.08.95
35	Nianzou **KOUASSI**	(17) 07.06.02
20	Layvin **KURZAWA**	(27) 04.09.92
5	**MARQUINHOS** (Bra)	(25) 14.05.94
12	Thomas **MEUNIER** (Blg)	(28) 12.09.91
2	Thiago **SILVA** (Bra)	(35) 22.09.84

MIDFIELDERS

38	Adil **AOUCHICHE**	(17) 15.07.02
11	Angel **DI MARIA** (Arg)	(31) 14.02.88
23	Julian **DRAXLER** (Ger)	(26) 20.09.93
27	Idrissa **GUEYE** (Sen)	(30) 26.09.89
21	Ander **HERRERA** (Spa)	(30) 14.08.89
8	Leandro **PAREDES** (Arg)	(25) 29.06.94
19	Pablo **SARABIA** (Spa)	(27) 11.05.92
6	Marco **VERRATTI** (Ita)	(26) 05.11.92

FORWARDS

9	Edinson **CAVANI** (Uru)	(32) 14.02.87
17	Eric Maxim **CHOUPO-MOTING** (Cam)	(30) 23.03.89
18	Mauro **ICARDI** (Arg)	(26) 19.02.93
7	Kylian **MBAPPE**	(20) 20.12.98
36	Loic **MBE SOH**	(18) 13.06.01
10	**NEYMAR** (Bra)	(27) 05.02.92

COACH

Thomas **TUCHEL** (Ger)	(46) 29.08.73

REIMS

GOALKEEPERS

30	Yehvann **DIOUF**	(19) 16.11.99
16	Nicolas **LEMAITRE**	(22) 12.01.97
1	Predrag **RAJKOVIC** (Ser)	(24) 31.10.95

DEFENDERS

5	Yunis **ABDELHAMID** (Mor)	(32) 28.09.87
6	Axel **DISASI**	(21) 11.03.98
32	Thomas **FOKET** (Blg)	(25) 25.09.94
3	Ghislain **KONAN** (IvC)	(23) 27.12.95
29	Dario **MARESIC** (Aut)	(20) 29.09.99

MIDFIELDERS

-	Gregory **BERTHIER**	(23) 11.11.95
24	Mathieu **CAFARO**	(22) 25.03.97
23	Moreto **CASSAMA** (GuB)	(21) 16.02.98
7	Xavier **CHAVALERIN**	(28) 07.03.91
20	Tristan **DINGOME** (Cam)	(28) 17.02.91
25	Moussa **DOUMBIA** (Mli)	(25) 15.08.94
13	Hassane **KAMARA** (Gam)	(25) 05.03.94
8	Derek **KUTESA** (Swi)	(21) 06.12.97
26	Nolan **MBEMBA**	(24) 19.02.95
15	Marshall **MUNETSI** (Zim)	(23) 22.06.96
4	Alaixys **ROMAO** (Tog)	(35) 18.01.84
14	Sambou **SISSOKO**	(20) 27.04.99

FORWARDS

11	Boulaye **DIA**	(22) 16.11.96
9	Anastasios **DONIS** (Gre)	(23) 29.08.96
33	Nathanael **MBUKU**	(17) 16.03.02
19	Timothee **NKADA**	(20) 20.07.99
18	Remi **OUDIN**	(22) 18.11.96
27	Virgile **PINSON**	(23) 22.02.96
10	**SUK** Hyun-jun (SKo)	(28) 29.06.91
17	Arber **ZENELI** (Kos)	(24) 25.02.95

COACH

David **GUION**	(52) 30.09.67

RENNES

GOALKEEPERS

30	Pepe **BONET** (DRC)	(16) 13.02.03
40	Elias **DAMERGY**	(17) 17.10.02
16	Edouard **MENDY**	(27) 01.03.92
1	Romain **SALIN**	(35) 29.07.84

DEFENDERS

31	Sacha **BOEY**	(19) 13.09.00
3	Damien **DA SILVA**	(31) 17.05.88
5	Souleyman **DOUMBIA** (IvC)	(23) 24.09.96
26	Jeremy **GELIN**	(22) 24.04.97
21	Joris **GNAGNON**	(22) 13.01.97
15	Jeremy **MOREL** (Mad)	(35) 02.04.84
4	Gerzino **NYAMSI**	(22) 22.01.97
27	Hamari **TRAORE** (Mli)	(27) 27.01.92

MIDFIELDERS

14	Benjamin **BOURIGEAUD**	(25) 14.01.94
18	Eduardo **CAMAVINGA** (Con)	(16) 10.11.02
34	Yann **GBOHO**	(18) 14.01.01
8	Clement **GRENIER**	(28) 07.01.91
10	Rafik **GUITANE**	(20) 26.05.99
23	Adrien **HUNOU**	(25) 19.01.94
6	Jakob **JOHANSSON** (Swe)	(29) 21.06.90
12	James **LEA SILIKI**	(23) 12.06.96
17	Faitout **MAOUASSA**	(21) 06.07.98
28	Jonas **MARTIN**	(29) 09.04.90
20	Flavien **TAIT**	(26) 02.02.93

FORWARDS

22	Romain **DEL CASTILLO**	(23) 29.03.96
19	Metehan **GUCLU** (Tur)	(20) 02.04.99
11	M'Baye **NIANG** (Sen)	(24) 19.12.94
7	**RAPHINHA** (Bra)	(22) 14.12.96
25	Diafra **SAKHO** (Sen)	(29) 24.12.89
9	Theoson **SIEBATCHEU**	(23) 26.04.96

COACH

Julien **STEPHAN**	(39) 18.09.80

SAINT-ETIENNE

GOALKEEPERS

50	Stefan **BAJIC**	(17) 23.12.01
30	Jessy **MOULIN**	(33) 13.01.86
16	Stephane **RUFFIER**	(33) 27.09.86
1	Theo **VERMOT**	(22) 27.01.97

DEFENDERS

26	Mathieu **DEBUCHY**	(34) 28.07.85
5	Timothee **KOLODZIEJCZAK**	(28) 01.10.91
40	Leo **LACROIX** (Swi)	(27) 27.02.92
2	Harold **MOUKOUDI**	(21) 27.11.97
33	Mickael **NADE**	(20) 04.03.99
23	Sergi **PALENCIA** (Spa)	(23) 23.03.96
24	Loic **PERRIN**	(34) 07.08.85
4	William **SALIBA**	(18) 24.03.01
11	Gabriel **SILVA** (Bra)	(28) 13.05.91
19	Alpha **SISSOKO**	(22) 07.03.97
13	Miguel **TRAUCO** (Per)	(27) 25.08.92

MIDFIELDERS

17	Jean **AHOLOU** (IvC)	(25) 20.03.94
20	Denis **BOUANGA** (Gab)	(25) 11.09.94
7	Ryad **BOUDEBOUZ** (Alg)	(29) 19.02.90
29	Yohan **CABAYE**	(33) 14.01.86
8	Mahdi **CAMARA**	(21) 30.06.98
25	Assane **DIOUSSE** (Sen)	(22) 20.09.97
-	Wesley **FOFANA**	(18) 17.12.00
21	Romain **HAMOUMA**	(32) 29.03.87
6	Yann **M'VILA**	(29) 29.06.90
18	Arnaud **NORDIN**	(21) 17.06.98
28	Zaydou **YOUSSOUF**	(20) 11.07.99

FORWARDS

31	Charles **ABI**	(19) 12.04.00
27	Robert **BERIC** (Sln)	(28) 17.06.91
9	Lois **DIONY**	(26) 20.12.92
14	Franck **HONORAT**	(23) 11.08.96
10	Wahbi **KHAZRI** (Tun)	(28) 08.02.91
22	Kevin **MONNET-PAQUET**	(31) 19.08.88

COACH

Claude **PUEL**	(58) 02.09.61

STRASBOURG

GOALKEEPERS

30	Bingourou **KAMARA**	(23) 21.10.96
16	Eiji **KAWASHIMA** (Jap)	(36) 20.03.83
40	Louis **PELLETIER**	(19) 03.02.00
1	Matz **SELS** (Blg)	(27) 26.02.92

DEFENDERS

33	Ismael **AANEBA**	(20) 29.05.99
19	Anthony **CACI**	(22) 01.07.97
23	Lionel **CAROLE**	(28) 12.04.91
24	Alexander **DJIKU**	(25) 09.08.94
5	Lamine **KONE** (IvC)	(30) 01.02.89
27	Kenny **LALA**	(28) 03.10.91
13	Stefan **MITROVIC** (Ser)	(29) 22.05.90
3	Abdallah **N'DOUR** (Sen)	(25) 20.12.93
-	Azzedine **OUNAHI** (Mor)	(19) 19.04.00
2	Mohamed **SIMAKAN**	(19) 03.05.00

MIDFIELDERS

17	Jean-Ricner **BELLEGARDE** (Hai)	(21) 27.06.98
10	Benjamin **CORGNET**	(32) 06.04.87
22	Youssouf **FOFANA**	(20) 10.01.99
6	Jeremy **GRIMM**	(32) 27.03.87
34	Adrien **LEBEAU**	(20) 08.07.99
11	Dimitri **LIENARD**	(31) 13.02.88
14	Sanjin **PRCIC** (Bos)	(25) 20.11.93
18	Ibrahima **SISSOKO**	(22) 27.10.97
26	Adrien **THOMASSON**	(25) 10.12.93
7	Moataz **ZEMZEMI** (Tun)	(20) 07.08.99

FORWARDS

25	Ludovic **AJORQUE**	(25) 25.02.94
31	Ivann **BOTELLA**	(20) 28.06.99
29	Nuno **DA COSTA** (CV)	(28) 10.02.91
12	Lebo **MOTHIBA** (SAf)	(23) 28.01.96
20	Kevin Lucien **ZOHI** (Mli)	(22) 18.08.97

COACH

Thierry **LAUREY**	(55) 17.02.64

TOULOUSE

GOALKEEPERS

16	Florentin **BLOCH**	(19) 02.02.00
1	Mauro **GOICOECHEA** (Uru)	(31) 27.03.88
30	Baptiste **REYNET**	(29) 28.10.90

DEFENDERS

2	Kelvin **AMIAN**	(21) 08.02.98
19	Bafode **DIAKITE**	(19) 06.01.00
23	Moussa **DIARRA**	(18) 10.11.00
13	Mathieu **GONCALVES**	(18) 08.06.01
15	Nicolas **ISIMAT-MIRIN**	(27) 15.11.91
5	Steven **MOREIRA**	(25) 13.08.94
18	Agustin **ROGEL** (Uru)	(22) 17.10.97
24	Anthony **ROUAULT**	(18) 29.05.01
3	Gen **SHOJI** (Jap)	(26) 11.12.92
12	Issiaga **SYLLA** (Gui)	(25) 01.01.94

MIDFIELDERS

31	Amine **ADLI**	(19) 10.05.00
11	Quentin **BOISGARD**	(22) 17.03.97
14	Mathieu **DOSSEVI** (Tog)	(31) 02.02.88
34	Kouadio **KONE**	(18) 17.05.01
27	Jean-Victor **MAKENGO**	(21) 12.06.98
29	Nathan **NGOUMOU**	(19) 14.03.00
17	Ibrahim **SANGARE** (IvC)	(21) 02.12.97
6	Kalidou **SIDIBE**	(20) 28.01.99
21	William **VAINQUEUR**	(30) 19.11.88

FORWARDS

7	Max **GRADEL** (IvC)	(31) 30.11.87
8	Corentin **JEAN**	(24) 15.07.95
20	Efthymios **KOULOURIS** (Gre)	(23) 06.03.96
10	Aaron **LEYA ISEKA** (Blg)	(21) 15.11.97
25	Wesley **SAID**	(24) 19.04.95
9	Yaya **SANOGO**	(26) 27.01.93
32	Adil **TAOUI**	(18) 10.08.01
22	Stephane **ZOBO** (Cam)	(19) 02.08.00

COACH

Antoine **KOMBOUARE**	(55) 16.11.63

(ages as of 01.11.19)

Warm welcome... Panathinaikos take to the pitch at Olympiakos' Karaiskakis Stadium

OLYMPIAKOS v PANATHINAIKOS

The Greek capital is home to the "Mother of all battles"

Also known as the "Derby of the eternal rivals", the Olympiakos-Panathinaikos showdown sees a coming together of the two most successful teams in Greece.

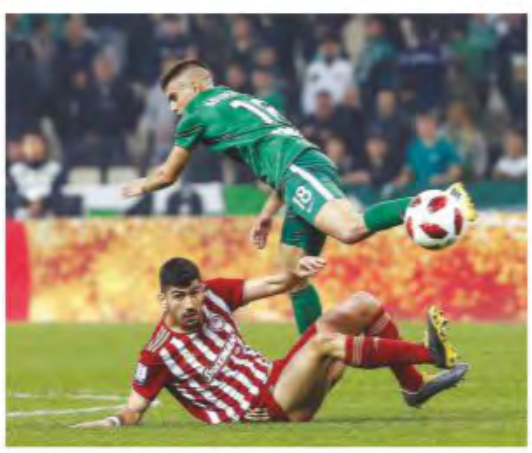
Founded in 1908, Panathinaikos are from the centre of Athens and were originally considered to represent the city's ruling classes. Olympiakos, meanwhile, were formed 17 years later around the city's port of Piraeus and attracted fans from the surrounding working-class areas.

Today, both clubs enjoy support from all social classes and across the whole of the country, but there is little doubt which team is the dominant force.

Over the past 23 seasons Olympiakos have won the Super League 19 times, with Panathinaikos champions just twice. They have also won 79 major titles in total, compared to Panathinaikos' 44.

Panathinaikos, however, are the only Greek side to reach a continental club Final, finishing runners-up in the 1971 European Cup.

While players have moved from one side to the other, it is a switch only the bravest consider making as feelings run high. When Stratos Apostolakis left Olympiakos for Panathinaikos in 1990, that year's Greek Super Cup was cancelled due to fears that fans who were appalled at the move would riot. WS



Passionate... Andreas Bouchalakis of Olympiakos (in red) and Panathinaikos' Giannis Bouzoukis clash last season

CLASSIC ENCOUNTERS

1930 Jun 1
Panathinaikos win 8-2 in what remains the highest scoring game between the great rivals.

1977 Oct 9
Panathinaikos win 2-1 away in a particularly spikey encounter in which both sides finish with nine men following four red cards.

2004 May 8
In the 11th and last time the two sides met in the Greek Cup Final, Panathinaikos triumph 3-1.

2019 Sep 21
Panathinaikos' Yohan Mollo scores a last-minute equaliser as the sides draw 1-1 in the 69th stalemate. Olympiakos now lead 81-50 in head-to-head victories.

ON BOTH SIDES

LAKIS PETROPOULOS
1950-63; (coach) 1968-70, 1979, 1981-82
(coach) 1971, 1972-75

GEORGIOS DELIKARIS
1969-78
1978-81

NIKOS SARGANIS
1980-85
1985-90

STRATOS APOSTOLAKIS
1985-90
1990-99; (coach) 2001

ANTONIOS NIKOPOLIDIS
1989-2004
2004-11

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